CLATSOP COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

CUMTUX

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CCHS Photo # 1831-310

Salmon taken by seines on the Columbia River, perhaps in the 1930s.

River World

The Humes, the Kinneys, John West, and the Adairs are well-known pioneer cannerymen. Much has been written about their careers on the Lower Columbia River and on the West Coast. Very little has appeared in print about John Devlin who built the third cannery in Astoria, operating it profitably from 1876 to 1890. Rahles Goodell has combined research with family recollections to tell us his story in this issue. Other articles on the theme of work on the river and ocean, in this issue, include: Wilbur Northup's fishing stories, Duncan Law's article on the invention of the fish pellet, Viola Abrahamson's article on her mother's career cooking on the seining grounds, and a story about the county's distant past, by Lawrence Parker, about the British interests in the region.

Two of the articles give differing explanations for the decline of the Columbia River salmon, a subject far too complicated to cover in this issue. There are many books that treat it in depth which can be found at local libraries, the research library at the Maritime Museum, and at the Heritage Museum. Two good books are: *Salmon Fishers of the Columbia* by Courtland L. Smith (1979) and Irene Martin's The *Story of Columbia River Gillnetters (*1994). The latter has a bibliography that is a treasure in itself.

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Cover: Elise Devlin in the upstairs bedroom of her house on the southwest corner of 16th and Exchange, ca. 1915.

Printer: Anchor Graphics
Astoria, Oregon

CUMTUX: Chinook jargon:
"To know...acknowledge...to inform"

John A. and Elise Devlin: Pioneer Salmon Packers

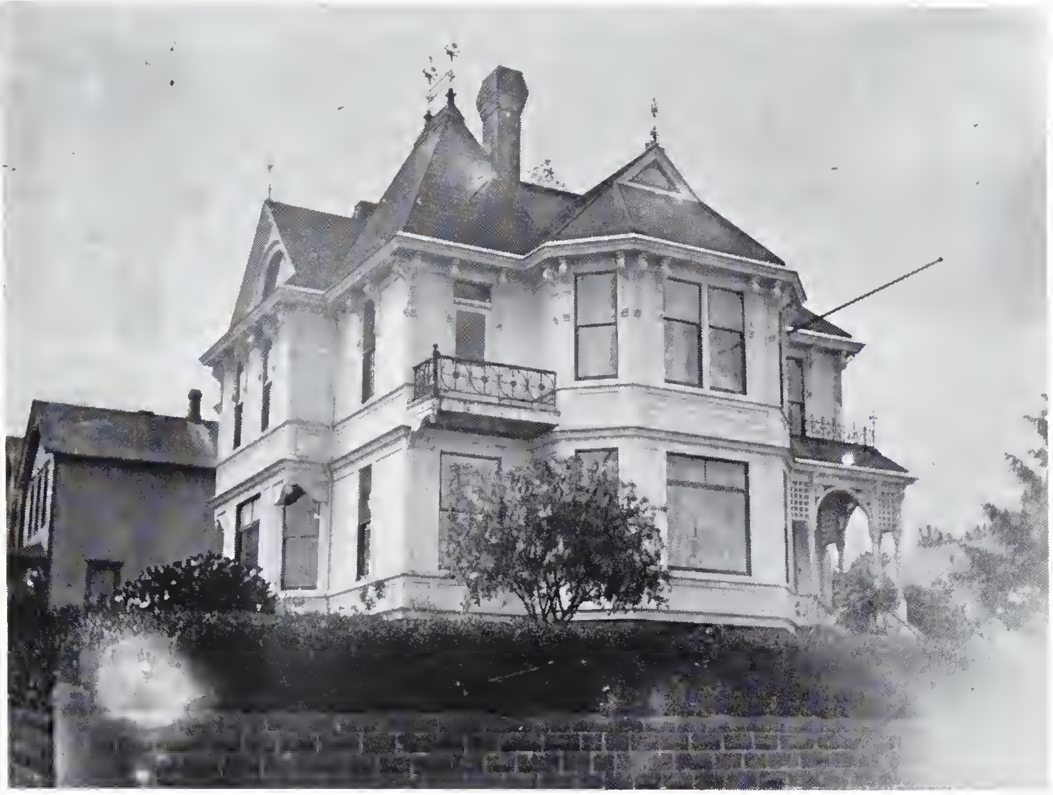
By Rahles Blissett Goodell

Perched on the corner of 16th and Exchange Streets, across from the Heritage Museum in Astoria and overlooking the Columbia River, sits the beautiful three-story Victorian house built by John Arthur Devlin for his wife Elise in 1891.

John Devlin, pioneer and one of the first leading salmon packers on the Columbia River, was born in New York of Irish immigrant parents around 1835. He was a purser on boats on the Great Lakes and came across the plains with a team of mules before the Union Pacific Railway was built.[1] He came to the Pacific Northwest and married Elise Rahles, the younger sister of his friend Albert W. Rahles, in 1874, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Portland, Oregon. The Devlins moved to Astoria in 1875 and lived on Salmon Street, where "Thieves entered...and stole considerable property. Mr. and Mrs. Devlin were not at home."[2] [3]

In 1886, the Devlins purchased the north part of lots 1 and 2 in block 114 in Shively's Astoria on Cedar Street and West 7th from J. D. and Rebecca Merryman for $4,500.00. Their new address was 761 Cedar Street.[4] Mention is made in the *Morning Astorian* on June 19, 1891 of a new house to be built by the John A. Devlins on the corner of Cedar Street and West 7th "on the site of his present domicile." On October 4, 1891, the following article appeared, "The residence of John A. Devlin, south-west corner of Cedar and West Seventh, is to be moved back this week. Plans for a $10,000 residence on that corner are being drawn, and work upon it will shortly begin." When street names and numbers were changed in Astoria in 1955, the address became 691 Exchange Street.

Salmon was a valued export in the Northwest, reportedly selling for fifty cents a pound in New York City in the 1880s. Devlin made his fortune in salmon packing, owning canneries in Astoria and Puget Sound. He learned the business and worked as a bookkeeper for the Humes, the first salmon packers (1864) on the West Coast, while building his own cannery.[5] In 1875, Devlin and his partner Captain Theodore Wygant of Portland, whose wife was the granddaughter of Dr. John McLoughlin, were granted permission to build a wharf with buildings thereon between Farmers' Warehouse and the A. Booth & Company cannery in blocks 125 and 128 in Shively's Astoria. The cannery was to be ready for business in April of the next year--the beginning of the curing season. T. C. Elliott wrote in the 1918 *Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, Volume XIX, that Devlin's was the third cannery built in Astoria, and that it was in operation in 1876. *The Weekly Astorian* of February 26, 1876 reported, "Messrs. Devlin & Wygant's will be the



Courtesy of Rahles B. Goodell

House built by John A. Devlin on the sw corner of 16th and Exchange in Astoria. Date about 1910.

third cannery established at Astoria. They are about ready to fish." And later, "The boiler for Messrs. Devlin & Co.'s cannery has arrived, and will be put into its proper place this week." The first Astoria cannery was Badollet & Company and the second was A. Booth & Company.

Devlin's Puget Sound cannery at Friday Harbor was built much later, in partnership with Astorians Fred Keen and Phillip Cook. Within two weeks of choosing the site in April, work began on the cannery, and it was ready for work at the start of the salmon season on August 1st. The year referenced is 1894, but it is probably incorrect as Devlin "retired" in 1890. It was during a depression, and according to Captain William P. Thornton, "It was like a bolt of thunder into the silent little community and before twenty days had passed there wasn't a man, woman, or child who wanted to work that didn't have a job." They canned only sockeyes, 18,000 cases the first year-the other fish were thrown back into the sea.[6]

Fishing boats were an integral part of the business. Blueprints for Devlin's cannery show moorage for 38 boats. The *Weekly Astorian* reported, "Several new fishing boats for Devlin & Co. arrived on the 2nd by the American ship *Samuel Watts* from San Francisco. They are all handsome-looking boats, copper-fastened, and equal to the best boats on the river." The *Astorian* mentions Devlin's purchase of the following steamers: *Rescue* in 1876, *Mikado* in 1888, *City of Sellwood* ($4,000) in 1889, and *City of Astoria* in 1889.

The manufacture of tin cans was another part of the cannery business. Cans were made by hand in those days, and Devlin produced his own. "J. Devlin has begun the manufacture of cans for the coming season, having received 1,000 boxes of tin by the *Annie Main* and 1,500 by the *Merwanjee Framjee*."[8] According to Mont Hawthorne,[9] who worked for Devlin for five years, the tin came around the Horn from Britain in sailing ships that returned with wheat and canned fish. Devlin's tin came from Belmorrow and Ledbrook, English firms. Crude hand machines were used for cutting the tin. Soft coke tin was used for the tops and bottoms, and a harder tin was bent around the sides. The side seams were soldered by hand, but the tops and bottoms were soldered by machine. The cans were heated in the process and wiped by hand. "Chinaboys did all the inside hand jobs, like making the cans."[10]On the list of 69 Columbia River Canners with Highest Productivity from 1880-1898, John A. Devlin & Co. was ranked 8th, tied with Wm. Hume and J. G. Megler.[11] Bureau of Fisheries records show that Devlin packed 21,500 cases of salmon in 1876, shipped 500 cases of beef on November 10, 1877, packed 20,000 cases of salmon in 1881, increased each year to a peak of 23,000 cases in 1885, and then decreased each year to 11,250 cases in 1889.

Early packing operations were undertaken with considerable risk, and Devlin's company was not without problems. "An Italian, name unknown, fishing for John A. Devlin & Co., went to sea Sunday night, May 27th, and had a very stormy time of it. He came in alive, but his companion died soon after getting to sea, the first night. He struck the beach in Tillamook County...by the aid of Temple and Z. N. Seeley and Jacob R. Cromwell pulled his boat upon the beach...The poor fellow has had a very hard time. His life was spared, by the accident of having caught a sturgeon. For several days he clung to the bottom of his boat at sea turning it on the 8th day, before he reached shore...."[12] And the following year, "...Messrs. Devlin & Co. received a private letter last evening from Mr. P. J. McGowan, of Chinook, that a boat marked *D. & Co., No. 7*, had come ashore on the beach with the net. One of the men was found entangled in the net, lifeless, while the other is supposed to be drowned."[13]

Astoria had a reputation as a rough place. Hardy young men were in danger of being shanghaied into service as sailors on the ships sailing into port. Cannery workers carried loaded revolvers to avoid being waylaid. [14]

In 1877, Astoria was actually two towns separated by Scow Bay and accessible to each other only by boat along the beach at low tide, or over the hill. The following occasion brought the issue to the fore. "The Mess House connected with the factory of John A. Devlin & Co., near the line between this city and Upper Town, was destroyed by fire yesterday afternoon. Our fire boys No. 1s, 2s, and the Hooks at work at Devlin's...made an impression that prevented further spread of the fire. The steam tugs *Columbia* and *Canby* both had streams on the fire. Our engine was not able to reach the spot."[15] The fire prompted the following article in the same paper, "The beauties of the highway system, connecting these two towns (Astoria and Upper Astoria) were observed yesterday afternoon, at the time of the fire which destroyed Devlin & Co.'s mess house. Is it not a burning shame, and a disgrace, to allow decade after decade to pass by without connecting these towns by some sort of a decent highway, please tell us what is the reason. The fire companies of the city rushed to the assistance of Mr. Devlin, but were wholly unable to do any good, solely because they could not get to the fire with the engine." The following year a bridge was built, and on July 26th the newly united town celebrated with a parade by Lambert's Brass Band, a color bearer, and the Honorable Truman Pleasant Powers on horseback. The band was presented with a prize of $50, promised by a leading citizen of Upper Astoria "when they can march over a decent road from this part of the town to get it."[16]

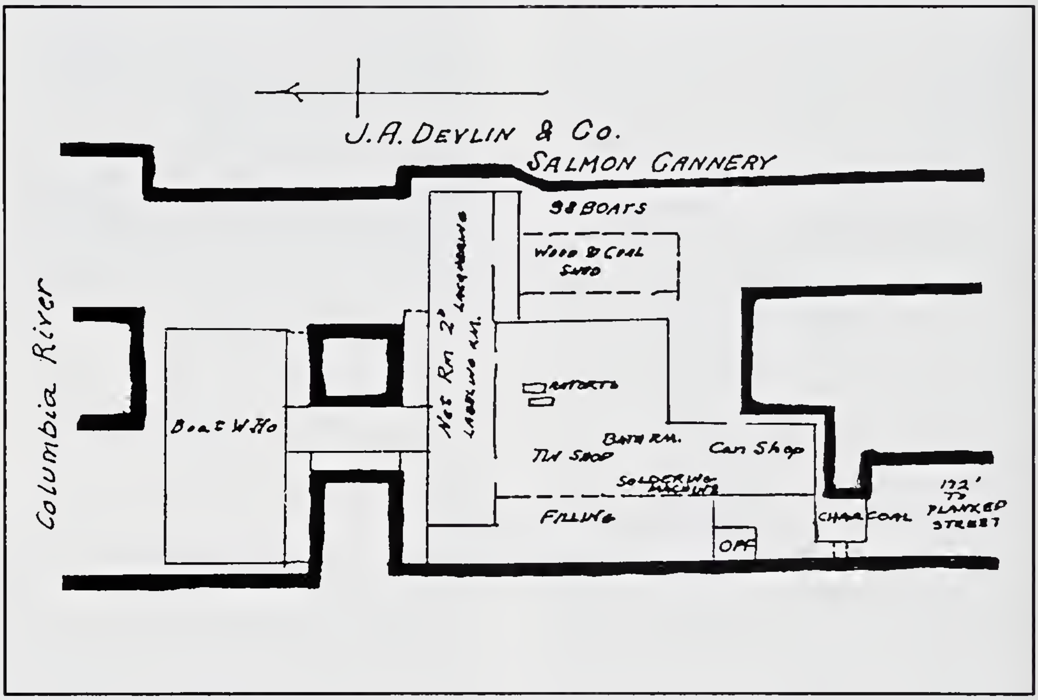
Another issue as far back as 1877 was the "Protection and Propagation of Salmon in the Columbia." Representatives from the eleven leading canneries in the area were requested to attend a 7:00 PM meeting on February 1 at the Courthouse in Astoria to discuss the issue.[17] Government officials were talking about building fish hatcheries. Promoting and protecting the salmon industry of the Columbia River was one purpose of the Packers' Trust Company, an entreprenurial group made up of John A. Devlin, J. G. Megler, Alfred Kinney, D. Morgan, S. Elmore, J. F. McGovern, Wm. Barker, C. Leinenweber, W. T. Chutter, P. J. McGowan, E. W. Tallant, C. W. Stone, and B. A. Seaborg, which filed for incorporation on January 21, 1888.[18]

However, according to Mont Hawthorne, one of Devlin's employees, a more critical problem was waste. Salmon were normally caught by nets and seines, but for a period of time around 1883, fish traps were used. Canneries contracted with organizations to purchase all the fish caught at seventy-five cents per fish. Both Devlin and Abe Booth, of A. Booth Packing Company, contracted with McGowan & Sons, who owned and operated the traps, to purchase the fish on alternate days. The canneries ran long hours; Hawthorne's day began at four a.m. and ended at eight p.m. during the big fish runs. Still they were unable to keep up with the huge supply of fish during some parts of the season. Forty to fifty Chinese workers at Devlin's worked full time making tin cans, reportedly 17,000 per day in 1882,and this was not enough.[19] When all available tins were filled and several nine by four foot tanks were filled with salted fish, the remaining salmon were dumped into the river. All the canneries were having this problem, and hundreds of forty to fifty pound fish were dumped each day. Dead fish

Courtesy of Rahles B. Goodell

John A. Devlin is believed to be the man seated at right. Photo dates to about 1875.

washed up on the tide flats under the town of Astoria, and people complained of the smell. Also bears came into town attracted by the fish, and the women were frightened. The city hired men to take the dead fish farther out into the channel. Both Hawthorne and Devlin were unhappy about the wasted fish. Later, fish traps were outlawed, and the quantities of fish caught were diminished due to overfishing the river.[20]



Devlin's cannery, from the 1888 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Astoria (on microfilm at the Astoria Public Library). The cannery was built out on a dock into the Columbia River. The map shows the boat warehouse, the net room, the labeling and lacquering room, the wood and coal shed, the retorts, bath room, tin shop, can shop, soldering machine, the filling area, the office and the charcoal storage area.

In 1890 Devlin sold his cannery to M.J. Kinney of Astoria Fishery and retired from the salmon packing business. Kinney, by this time the largest cannery owner in the Northwest, operated the cannery for awhile, and later it became part of the Kinney property that was sold in 1919 to Lang and Company, Portland grocers. The cannery building itself was probably not in existence after 1904. On October 12, 1903, the *Astoria Daily Budget* reported, "Chief Stockton is making an effort to have old and unoccupied buildings torn down and has found considerable trouble in getting owners to have the work done, but there are some noticeable exceptions. He wrote Mrs. Kinney that the old Devlin cannery should be removed and he has received a reply from her that she will have it done as soon as possible." However, mention is made in the May 23, 1919 *Morning Astorian* that the old Devlin cannery building was used as a National Guard armory prior to W.W.I.

Devlin was also involved in other business and civic ventures. For a short period of time in 1888, he was President of the Astoria and South Coast Railway, a railway intended to go from Astoria to Hillsboro. That year the section between Young's Bay and Seaside was completed. However, the railway was never finished, and the project was abandoned in 1892.[21] Several other railroad projects were taking place at the time, and in 1891, John Devlin, George Flavel, and James Taylor formed a railroad committee to reorganize and form alliances with existing railroads.[22] Persistence of the Astorians finally paid off; on April 3, 1898, the "last spike" was driven near Clatskanie and on May 16th, a train traveled from Astoria to Portland with over 700 passengers. "The train rolled slowly over the long trestle that leads to Tongue Point, and all along the line at every station and hamlet the train was greeted with wild enthusiasm. Every boat, cannery or sawmill that came within its sight turned loose its steam whistle."[23]

In 1890, Devlin was Vice President of the First National Bank, and in 1893, became President. He owned several business properties in Astoria, and in 1891 built two-story brick buildings on what is now 14th and Commercial and 14th and Marine Drive and a three-story brick hotel south of his former cannery. (These were destroyed during the Astoria Fire of 1922.) In 1899, he built flats on 1st and Harrison. He also owned several pieces of business property in downtown Portland.

St. Mary's Hospital in Astoria became a reality in 1880, under the leadership of Father Leopold Dieleman, Astoria's energetic Catholic priest, and the guidance of Archbishop Francis Norbert Blanchet of the diocese of Oregon, and "aided by the then shining lights of the local Catholic world, John A. Devlin and his estimable wife Elise, P.J. Goodman, Patrick Kearney, Sr., and P. J. McGowan, Sr., and a host of others too numerous to mention." These same "shining lights" were again called upon by the Sisters of Providence to build a new wing for the hospital in 1895.[24] At the time of his death, he was involved with the building of the new St. Mary's Catholic Church in Astoria, having already contributed nearly $2000 towards its construction and arranging to leave it another $3000 in his will.

After his retirement, Devlin and his wife continued to live in their house in Astoria, but spent winters in San Francisco. In 1902, about two weeks after their arrival in San Francisco, word was received in Astoria of his death on December 29th. Cause of death was heart failure. His body was returned to Oregon for burial. The funeral took place in Portland at St. Mary's Cathedral and was attended by a large number of prominent residents from Portland and Astoria. "His Grace Archbishop Christie celebrated the Pontifical Requiem Mass attended by the following clergymen: Reverend C. J. O'Reilly, Rev. M. Quinlan, Rev. J. F. Waters, Rev. A. Lane, Rev. E. Casey, Rev. J. F. McNally, Rt. Rev. Mgr. Blanchet, Rev. P. J. Carrol, and Rev. L. A. Brosseau. ...His Grace delivered a touching eulogy on the life and virtues of the deceased...a model of a practical Catholic, an honorable citizen, and a man in every way worthy of the highest respect..."[25]

"...He was one of the best known and highly respected of Astoria's citizens and was considered one of the best business men on the coast. Formerly he was engaged in the salmon canning business but retired from active life a number of years ago after having accumulated a comfortable fortune. He was the leading member of the local Catholic Church and always contributed liberally to its support. The edifice now in course of construction is largely due to his enterprise. The Devlin residence....is one of the prettiest in the city."[26]

Courtesy of Rahles B. Goodell

John A. Devlin, circa 1900.

Printed in the newspaper was the following "Tribute to John A. Devlin" by Theodore Wygant. "...Having been a partner in business with him, and having known him intimately for the past 30 years, I speak advisedly in saying that I have never known a man more honorable, honest, upright, conscientious and worthy in all respects. Of strong character, with strong confidence in his own judgment, abhorrent of all sham and deceit, outspoken, he was a terror to any wrongdoer who came in his way. He was a very successful business man and accumulated a fortune from the salmon canning business at Astoria. The label of 'John A. Devlin & Co.' on a can of salmon was an absolute guaranty of its quality. Devoted to his beloved wife, charitable and kind to those whose needs came to his notice, quietly doing good whenever the opportunity came, he lived a useful and honorable life. In religion, he was a devout and consistent Catholic. In my 52 years residence in Oregon, I have not met a man who has commanded a stronger hold on my esteem and admiration than John A. Devlin."

Ever mindful of from whence his wealth had come and with concern that it be used for the benefit of others, the bulk of his estate, subject to the life interest of his wife, was left to various Catholic organizations. Some of the charities to benefit from his benevolence during his lifetime and after were St. Mary's Catholic Church and St. Mary's Hospital in Astoria, St. Vincent's Hospital in Portland, St. Mary's Home for Orphan Boys (now Beaverton Home for Boys), Sisters of Providence, Home of the Good Shepherd, Diocese of Portland, Holy Names Sisters, and Sisters of the Precious Blood.

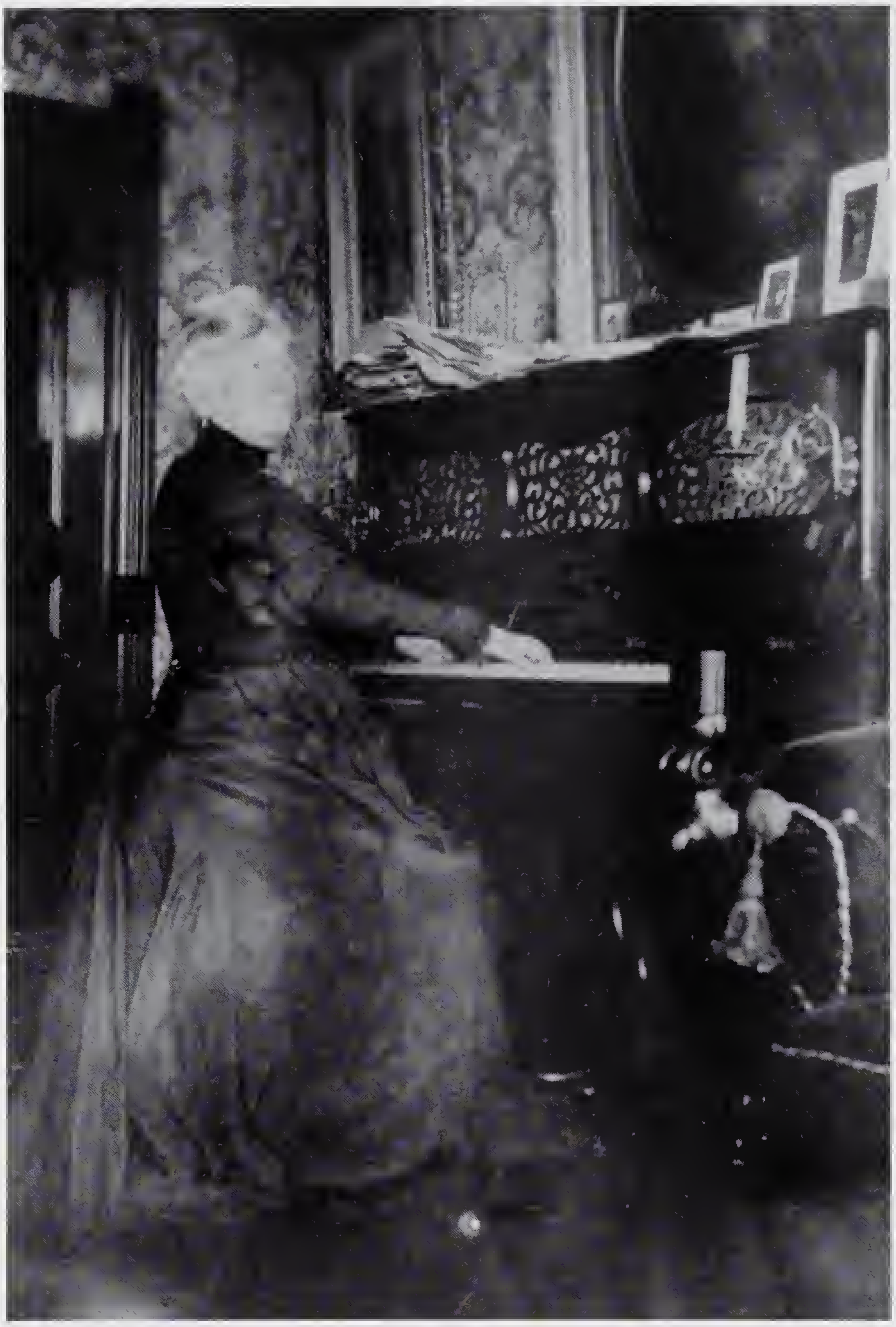
His largest bequest, however, was for the building of a new parochial school in Astoria. This consisted of $10,000 in cash, lot 5 block 5--the northeast corner of 1st and Morrison in Portland, and his residence in Astoria. A plaque above the entrance to the auditorium of the Star of the Sea school reads, "In Memory of John A. Devlin."[27]

Elise Rahles Devlin outlived her husband by nearly 17 years. Born in Cologne, Germany on June 19, 1841, "Elisa" came to Portland at the invitation of her brother Albert Rahles in 1872. She lived with Albert's family, taught piano lessons, met and married Albert's friend John Devlin in 1874.

The Devlin house was run graciously with servants including a maid and a Chinese cook. Although the Devlins had no children of their own, their house was not without visitors and young people. Albert Rahles, who worked as a steward on the Flavel ships and later the OR&N on the Columbia River, was a frequent visitor until his death by drowning during the sinking of the *Alaskan* in 1889. And a room was kept ready in their house at all times for visits from the Archbishop.

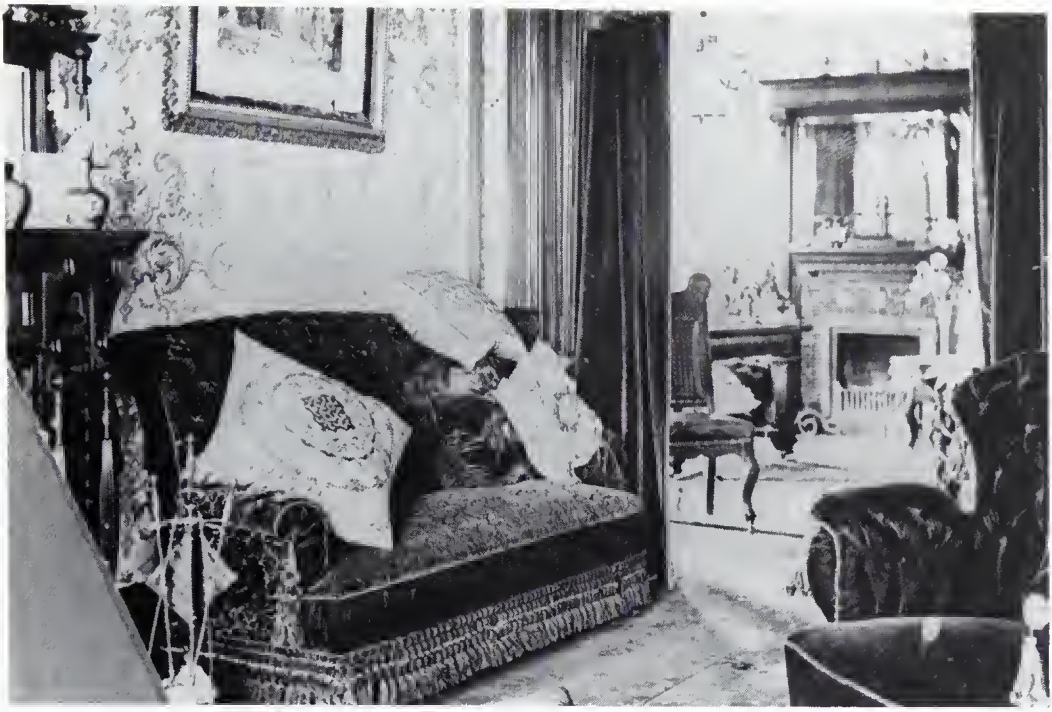
The Rahles children were frequent visitors, especially daughters Emma (Epping), Marie Helene "Nan" (Osburn), and Maud, who lived with Auntie and Uncle Devlin for extended periods of time and attended the convent school in Astoria. Auntie was a very strict guardian of the girls, allowing them little freedom except to attend church and choir practice, feed the chickens, and pick up slugs in the garden. Nevertheless, they managed to escape, meet their beaux around the corner, and go off on bicycle rides. Cleaning the canary cage was an odious chore, and Emma told her sister, "Don't worry, Nan, I'll let the canary out of the cage before you get here!" Nan met her future husband, Austin Osburn, while living with the Devlins. Uncle Devlin, frugal and well-intentioned but concerned over the quantities of underwear required for all the young ladies, purchased a bolt of serviceable sailcloth for this purpose. The sailcloth outlived him and kept the girls in underwear for many years. Later Emma's three daughters lived with the Devlins, and Nan's children, who lived in Astoria, were frequent visitors. Emma's oldest daughter Dorothy Epping (Elliot) was educated by the Devlins. "Sent to Berkeley on a boat," she graduated from the University of California. A talented and accomplished dancer, she went on to Boston to study, but after a year, she met her husband Frank and was married.

When John Devlin died, his wife went into mourning and donned widows' weeds, which she continued to wear for the rest of her life. Unique in many ways, Auntie wore a "transformation" (a woman's wig).[28] She also employed a "companion" who was kept busily knitting long black wool stockings for the girls to wear, and she had a commitment to the education of women which was uncommon in that day. Not wishing to live alone, she continued to have a succession of nieces and great-nieces live with her and attend school.



Courtesy of Rahles B. Goodell

Elise Devlin (Mrs. John Devlin) at the piano in her house at 16th and Exchange, about 1915.



Courtesy of Margaret Elliott

Interior of the Devlin house.

Auntie Devlin's outspoken and somewhat humorous comments, in heavily accented English, have become family legends. Niece Emma's daughter, Elisebeth Bridget Epping (Snow) was quite a young beauty and perhaps not so serious as her oldest sister. She had even been a bit rebellious, but not so much as sister Adrienne (Norton) who had preceded her, about wearing the long black stockings and the bag of asafetida around her neck. One of the girls was remembered to have remarked, "How could anyone stand to be near us?"[29] When the time came for Elisebeth to go to college, Emma came to Astoria by train and said, "Now Auntie, it is time for Elisebeth to go to college." Auntie did indeed send her niece to the University of Oregon with a legacy, but not without first observing, "Dat Lisebeth has not the brains to go by college!" "Dat Lisebeth" pledged Delta Gamma at the U. of O., and was one of the first Apple Blossom Queens from Hood River before marrying her sweetheart, Berkeley Snow. Other fondly remembered expressions are "If da soup's hot, fan it mit your ears," and "Don't schluffin mit der feet over der carpet," "Landing mit der po po in der butter," and "Nacht mit da finga in da nasa!"

One of the earliest memories of my mother, Elise Osburn (Blissett), born in 1908, is that of being a very young child, beribboned and ruffled, being set on the red carpet in the beautiful Victorian parlor. She was told to "Say hello to Auntie," given a firm push from behind, and fell flat at Auntie's feet. Young Elise later attended the convent school and walked to the Devlin house each day for lunch, entering through the kitchen and passing the pantry which smelled of hand-ground nutmeg. Auntie sat at the head of the table with her little brass bell to summon the maid. Soup was always the first course: a delicious black soup made in a black iron kettle on the wood stove. Fascinated with the sound of Auntie's false teeth clicking as she ate it, Elise developed a taste for cauliflower Every day after lunch, Elise followed Auntie, in her long black dress, through a dark hall, up two flights of stairs lit by flickering gas jets to the Archbishop's Room where Auntie opened a drawer in the tall Victorian dresser and removed one piece of chocolate candy purchased at the last church bazaar. Elise plopped the candy, which tasted of moth balls, into her mouth and went merrily back to school.

Although austere in her wig and rustling black dresses -- lovely dresses with black lace, black beaded embroidery, jet buttons, and black stones -- Auntie Devlin was nevertheless a generous and kindly woman. Wealthy people in those days paid rent on their church pews which were in turn identified by a small brass plaque. The Devlin pew was in the very front of the church. Each Sunday during Mass, Auntie removed a shiny fifty cent piece from a tiny silver chain purse and laid it on the railing for the usher to pick up during the collection. Elise, who often walked Auntie to church on Sundays, thought it the largest piece of money she would ever see. One Sunday, a rather shy little lady mistakenly ventured into the Devlin pew. Realizing her mistake, she was "petrified" (Elise's words) and very embarrassed. Auntie kindly reached over, patted her reassuringly and said, "It's all right, Dearie, stay where you are."

Elise Devlin was also generous to her remaining family in Europe, but after World War I started, she never heard from her relatives again. In 1919, she died in her house, shortly after having a stroke, just before her 79th birthday. She was somewhat heartened perhaps by news of the Allied preparation for a march to Berlin if Germany should refuse to sign the Peace Treaty. A newspaper obituary states, "Mrs. Devlin was a very charitable woman, and in spite of her German birth was very bitter against the autocracy of German rule and was a strong supporter of the American government, taking a big part in all war work here and purchasing heavily in Liberty Bonds...."[30] Her funeral was in Astoria, and she was buried in the family vault with her husband at St. Mary's Cemetery in Portland. All remains were moved from St. Mary's Cemetery to Mount Calvary in 1929, and the site was used to build Central Catholic High School. The Devlin vault is right next to that of Father C. F. Fierens, the priest who married them. Mrs. Devlin's estate was left to her nieces and nephews and favorite charities such as St. Mary's Hospital, St. Mary's Church, Sisters of Mercy, Holy Names Sisters, and the Paulist Fathers.

In accordance with John A. Devlin's will, the Devlin house at 691 Exchange Street was given to St. Mary's Church at Mrs. Devlin's death. In September 1922, Mrs. Florence Peterson opened a restaurant in the building.[31] In 1923 when the Holy Names Academy burned, Devlin's house was used as a parochial school while Star of the Sea school was being built.[32] From 1930-1933, Fahrion Funeral Home occupied the Devlin house. In 1938, the house was converted to apartments.[33] Today it is owned and occupied by Michael and Emily Henderson, who operate the Home Spirit Bakery and Cafe. I recently had the opportunity of visiting the house and enjoying a delicious lunch overlooking the Columbia River with friends, two great-great-grand nieces, Collette and Ginger Maltman, and a great-grand nephew, Jon Blissett, of John and Elise Devlin. Auntie would have loved it!

Rahles Blissett Goodell

Daughter of Elise Osburn Blissett
Granddaughter of "Nan" Osburn
Great-grand niece of Elise Rahles Devlin

Courtesy of Margaret Elliott

Elise Devlin in her flower garden about 1918.

Courtesy of Rahles B. Goodell

Elise Devlin's relatives at lunch in her house eighty years after her death. Clockwise, starting in front: Janet Volchok, Jon Blissett, Tom Owens, Glenna Owens, Ginger Maltman, Collette Maltman, Rahlie Blissette Goodell.

Notes:

[1] McKeown, Martha Ferguson. *The Trail Led North: Mont Hawthorne's Story*. New York: McMillan, 1948

[2] United States Federal Census for 1880

[3] *The Daily Astorian* October 6, 1880

[4] 1890 *Polk City Directory* for Astoria

[5] McKeown 1948

[6] Ralph W. Andrews and A. K. Larssen, *Fish and Ships*, New York: Bonanza Books, 1959

[7] *The Weekly Astorian* March 11, 1876

[8] *The Weekly Astorian* December 30, 1881

[9] McKeown 1948

[10] McKeown 1948

[11] Courtland L. Smith, *Salmon Fishers of the Columbia*, Oregon State University Press, 1979

[12] *The Daily Astorian* June 9, 1877

[13] *The Weekly Astorian* May 5, 1878

[14] McKeown 1948

[15] *The Weekly Astorian* July 21, 1877

[16] *The Weekly Astorian* July 13, 1878, August 3, 1887

[17] *The Daily Astorian* January 6, 1877

[18] *The Weekly Astorian* January 21, 1888

[19] *The Weekly Astorian* February 2, 1882

[20] McKeown 1948

[21] Miller, Emma Gene. *Clatsop County, Oregon: Its History, Legends, Industries*, Portland, Binford & Morts, 1958

[22] *The Daily Astorian*

[23] Miller 1958

[24] Hildebrand, Aug. *Cumtux*, Fall 1983: 26

[25] *Catholic Sentinel*, January 8, 1903

[26] *The Daily Morning Astorian*, December 30, 1902

[27] This was the 2nd parish school. The first, the Holy Names Academy, was located on the present site of Clatsop Community College's Performing Arts Center on the north east corner of 16th and Franklin.

[28] One of her transformations had an attached hat for going out.

[29] The 1974 *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines "asafetida" as "an ill-smelling plant gum formerly used in medicine." New York, N.Y., Simon & Schuster

[30] *The Morning Astorian* May 22, 1919

[31] *The Morning Astorian* September 16, 1922

[32] Star of the Sea's first class started in 1925.

[33] *The Astorian Budget* November 18, 1938

A Fisherman's Story

by Wilbur Northup

The following four articles by Wilbur Northup are dedicated to his wife, Louise. They are the result of a taped interview with Wilbur by Judi Mason Byrd on July 31, 1991. Mr. Northup passed away on April 24th, 1999 at Morro Bay, California.

……

I was born September 7, 1908 in Hoquiam, Washington in an apartment up over the theatre on Eighth Street. We moved from Westport, Washington to Astoria about 1916. My dad, Ray Northup, was in the Lighthouse Service, working on the lighthouse tenders in Astoria. There was the *Columbine*, the *Heather* and the *Rose*. He worked on all three of them at different times, and that was the Lighthouse Tenders them days. It wasn't the Coast Guard, but was a separate government service — and when they changed it over to the Coast Guard, then my dad was out of it.[1] And he went back to engineering on ships. He had about the highest steam engineering papers you could get.

My uncle and my grandfather used to tell us about the tugboats that would go out over the Columbia River [bar]. In the fog they'd blow their whistles and there might be two or three tugs out there, and the first one to find a ship could tow them in. The shipping companies would pay them later. They'd just bring them into Astoria, and another tug would take them on up to Portland.

When the steamships started coming in, my grandfather was the bar pilot. The last time I saw him, he was still bar piloting, in 1921 or '22. And then he retired and bought an apartment house down in Seaside. He used to tell us stories about going out, and they just had a little rowboat to go from the pilot boat over to the ship. It would be so rough sometimes that he would get on the ship and then couldn't get on the rowboat again, and he would be taken to the next port the ship was going to. Lots of times he went to Seattle, down to San Francisco and back up.

And my uncle told about a beer hall down along the waterfront someplace that had a trapdoor... Astoria at one time was all out over the water — until Astoria burned in 1922. Then they filled them all in.[2] Anyway, guys would go into these beer parlors, and they would give them knock-out drops and take them down, put them in a boat; and when they woke up they'd be way out on the ocean. It took a pretty big crew to run these sailboats.[3]

My grandfather was Johnny C. Reed. Everybody called him J.C. Reed. His son was Bill Reed. Bill ran a delivery truck for a wholesaler there in Astoria for years. When he quit driving truck there, he moved out on my grandfather's ranch on the Nehalem. My grandfather was out there before he ever went boating, I guess. But that must've been a long time ago because my grandfather was on tugboats on Gray's Harbor for years.

They didn't have pilot houses on the boats them days, just a great big steering wheel on the back end of the house.

Grandfather's nose was knocked way over to one side. The river was so narrow, and he had to back up; many times there were log rafts along the river and as he was backing up, he backed up a little too far and the rudder hit the log raft and the tugboat got this great big wheel — it was higher than he was — to give him leverage. And the wheel came around so fast, he'd tried to grab it, trying to stop it, and it hit his nose!

He was on tugboats there [Gray's Harbor] for a long time. Then he went down to the Columbia River. I think he died in the 1930s.[4]

I went to the Adair School on Franklin Street in Astoria, the old school before they tore it down and built this new one, Astor School. I was ten years old when we moved down to Astoria. I was in the third grade and lived in a house that was owned by Mrs. Olsen right up above the Hauke's store.[5] The house is still there [1991] and it looks the same as it did when we lived in it. And that building that is now a fire station museum — when we lived in Astoria, it was a dairy.[6] If we were there Wednesday, I think at 10 o'clock, we could get a gallon of real buttermilk for five cents a gallon. If nobody was there, they just pulled the plug and let it go down the river. We traded there at the Hauke's store.

We were there in Astoria when the Armistice was signed. And just west of Hauke's store, near the fire station, there was an "S" curve in the streetcar track, a sharp turn to the right, and then a sharp turn to the left, and then it went down into town. I don't think the streetcar ever went around that first curve going towards town but it would jump the track. I don't think the streetcar was any longer or wider than my (8' x 26') trailer, and the conductor — all by himself — would jump out, put something alongside the streetcar; he'd start it up and it would jump back on the track again. I never did look to see what it was, but it was something he would put alongside the track, and it would pull the thing back on. It would run up on an angle and go back on the track again.[7]

I would ride the trolley into town; it was a long walk, them days. No automobiles... or very few automobiles.

There was a big mill, just about where the Plywood Mill used to be.[8] It was run by the Army then, and the bunkhouse was right alongside the sidewalk. And there was windows all the way around, and four or five soldiers hid out of view at all those windows. And when the women were walking down by there, they'd holler and yell and whistle at them. The Army was running the mill for the war effort. It was the same up there at Crescent Lake [WA]. The Army built a railroad track from Port Angeles down almost the full length of Lake Crescent and it was never used.

In the airplanes — those days all the little bracing and everything was made out of wood. It was all spruce they used because spruce was strong and light and limber.

World War II days

We moved away from Astoria in 1918 and my dad went to work in a shipyard up at Vancouver, Washington. He worked on boats all his life. He started boating when he was fifteen years old. The *Tilly*, the little passenger boat that ran from Whidbey Island to Seattle, was the first boat he worked on. His last trip was from Seattle to Calcutta, India, with a load of wheat. He must have been, oh, 78 or 80 — somewhere around there.

We moved then from Vancouver

to the Queets [River, Western Washington]. And years and years later, Louise and I were living in Port Angeles; we had stock in this plywood [mill] we built up there, and after about a year and half, boy, I just couldn't stand it any longer.[9] And about that time Ralph called from Astoria and asked me to come down and go fishing with him.[10] "Oh," I said, "I got a good job here; I'd better stay with it." And he wrote up and told me about the fishing. You were supposed to be frozen on your job then, because that was during the war with the Japanese.

I went down to the office, to tell them I was quitting, and the woman said, "You can't quit. You're frozen on your job."

And I said, "I'd never been froze on a job any time in my life, and when I take a notion to leave it, I'm going to leave."

And she said, "Well, where ya going?"

And I said, "I'm going to Astoria — commercial fishing."

"Why didn't you say so to begin with?" she said. "Fishermen have the same priority that the Navy has." And so off I went. That was in 1943.[11]

Courtesy of the Mason Family

Louise and Wilbur Northup on board the troller *Destiny*, September 1967.

Ralph and I were raised together. After my mother died, I stayed with the Masons over on the Clearwater [River, Western Washington] one winter.[12] I was two years old and Ralph was seven when I went to live with them. So I knew him well and he knew me pretty well. We always got along good together, so he had me come down and go fishing with him. So I went! I fished with him for about three or four months and I started getting seasick. So back up to the plywood [mill] I went. But then I couldn't take it any longer. I got back to Astoria and went fishing on five different boats until I learned how to do it.

From the July 27, 1943 *Astoria Budget:*

"Destiny" Craft Launching Set

The new 46 foot deep sea fishing boat, "Destiny of Astoria," under construction by John Merilainen and his son, Victor, for the past two years, is on its way to the river today from its boat house at the corner of Hume and Bond streets. The builders say the craft will be in water some time Wednesday.

The "Destiny" measures 17 feet from keel to top of cabin house and has a 13-foot beam. General construction is of Douglas fir and oak with special trimmings in mahogany and wood from Australia and India.

H. R. Hansen of Seattle was the designer of the boat. It is equipped with a 70-horse power diesel engine. The Merilainens, father and son, have followed the carpenter and builder business for many years but will now become tuna and dragnet fishermen. The new boat has a load capacity of 17 tons.

But to go back, Ralph's first boat was the *Pup*. He fished it 'till he got money enough to buy the *Ruth R*. His brother Charley built it, and he only fished it one year.[13] [14] Then he bought the *Foster*. And — I can't think of the fellow's name — him and I fished with Ralph, and that winter we put drag gear on it and went dragging. I fished with Ralph for about a year that time. That was just shortly after Louise and I got married, in 1934.

I quit fishing with Ralph and I went in the plywood [mill] and around, and I studied diesel engineering and engineered on a tug pushing gas barges from The Dalles to Umatilla. I found out that was going to be the kind of life my dad had, so I thought, "I'm gonna get out of *this* business." So I went dragging the second time with Ralph, in 1943. And I drag-fished with him for, I think, three years.

Then I went on five different boats. I wanted to learn how to navigate and how to mend [net] web, and all that kind of stuff. And we bought the *Destiny* in 1948, I think it was; it had drag gear on it. Victor Merilainen and his dad built the boat in a boathouse at Bond and Hume Streets. It was launched in 1943.

Move to Morro Bay, California

I dragged with the *Destiny* out of Astoria for seven years for the New England Fish Company. There was another fellow there that worked for the New England Fish Company, and he started a little fish outfit of his own and I dragged fish for him. And in 1953 we went to Morro Bay. In 1952 I took the drag gear off and rebuilt the boat and made a troller out of it. We had the *Destiny* altogether for 26 years.[15]

We moved to Morro Bay, California in 1953 because we couldn't get good enough weather in Astoria to paint the darn boat! And so the two of us on the boat, any harbor we'd go into, south of Astoria, we were looking it over with the idea of living in it. And Louise had to quit in San Pedro and go back to Astoria to put the kids [son Ray and daughter Jean] in school.

I was bringing the boat up alone. The Ralph Hornes, our neighbors in Astoria, had moved to Morro Bay three years ahead of us. Oh, it was rough bringing the boat up from 'Pedro to Astoria. I got off at Morro Bay and thought, "Gosh almighty! There's no use battering into this here. I'll go into Morro Bay and see the Hornes." And I was there for five days, and he took me all around. That was in, oh, the first part of November. And, gosh almighty! We went out and picked a crate of strawberries for a dollar.

So I called Louise. I said, "This looks like the place we've been looking for."

"Can you rent a house?"

"Oh, there's lots of them for rent."

"Well, rent one, and I'll be packed when you get home." And we've lived there ever since then.

There have been some real daylight and dark changes over the years in the fishing fleet. It used to be that fishermen helped each other. I had one fisherman, Arnold Ennis in Morro Bay, who said, "Boy, if I ever get into any trouble, I hope you're out there!" But the fishermen used to tell each other where fish were and what the weather was like, and all that. And they kept their boats up. The fishing fleet looked like yachts.[16] But now they look like a bunch of junk! They can't make money enough to even buy the paint to paint 'em.

When we first bought the boat, I could buy a gallon of paint for a dollar and a quarter. And it got up to $15 and $20, copper paint for the bottom of the boat I bought for $6.25...a gallon of the best copper paint you could get. At first, you could do all your own work. They would just haul your boat out and put you back in the water. Then they passed a law that you can't do any work on your own boat under the waterline. So then the prices started going up. The last time we got painted on the bottom, it cost $80 a gallon for paint, for copper paint. And that wasn't the most expensive.

So many hippies started buying these old boats that were too dangerous for a person that knew anything about a boat, too dangerous for them to go out in. So these hippies would buy them 'cause they could get them for practically nothing. One boat was dragging out of Crescent City; the boat was in pretty good condition by looks, but the ocean makes them "work" and the planking comes loose. And...it was a drag boat — they went out dragging and they never come back.

And the same thing happened to the *Foster*."[17] It had this big Atlas engine in it; it was heavy and it was down low. Then it had 1,300 pounds of lead on the keel. And the guys that bought it there at Crescent City took this big engine out and put a little, light Jimmy — a General Motors diesel in it, 'way lighter than the Atlas. And they took all that lead off of the bottom, off the keel. They went out and then the thing turned over and sank. So, it was because they did such... well, they didn't know. If that was there, why didn't they leave it? I don't know whether they were saved or not.

After many years, the boat gets so limber. Now, the *Destiny* got that way. And I used to go up to Coos Bay to get hauled out and get painted and all that. And this — I can't remember his name, that owned the shipyard — he would pull a few nails up at any place in the boat and, "Gosh, almighty!" he said. "You'll never have to re-nail this boat." And gosh, it was getting along in years then! It was over four years old when I bought it, and I had it for 26 years. It was about 22, 24 years when I got hauled out there.

He said, "You better come out and take a look at this. I haven't pulled any of the nails yet."

And I said, "Well, I don't think you're going to need to."

There was rust streaks coming from all the nails. The nails wore out first, mostly on one side of the boat. The Coast Guard requires you to have a negative ground system in your electrical system. It has to be grounded to a 21-square-foot copper plate on the bottom of the boat, and everything is grounded to that. Well, being negative ground, when I tied up in

Morro Bay one winter alongside the *Rose Marie*, and it was positive ground, so the current was just running back and forth. Current goes from positive to negative, and that's why I had to get the boat re-nailed about two years before I sold it. Just from the waterline down.

The *Destiny* had a real good fathometer — that's another story. We were salmon fishing out of Half Moon Bay in California, and we could only fish a week, 'cause we had to ice the fish. The ice would melt in that amount of time. So that time, the wind was blowing and the week was just about up, so I told Louise, "Let's go up to Sausalito, sell our fish and get ice while it's blowing, get back here and be ready to go fishing." And it was blowing so hard it took longer to get up there than we figured. So it was after dark when we got back to Crescent City. I told Louise, "The boat doesn't feel right. Something's wrong!"

I turned the fathometer on, and it was one of these kind that has to warm up first, and by the time it warmed up, the ocean bottom was coming right up. And boy, I turned around real quick and got the heck out of there. And next time I got into port, I got a fathometer that, you turn it on, and it starts showing you the depths right away.

Then we had Loran; we had radar.[18] I had five radios: two of them AM radios. One was illegal, but I left it on there because it was a good back-up if the other one went haywire. And I had two CB radios and a VHF radio. I had three speakers out on the end of the boom and controls on all three of them so I could listen to anyone that I wanted to. And then I had a scanner. It had, I think, 15, 16 different frequencies. A little light would go from one frequency to another, like that, and anybody presses the light button, stops on them, and you'll hear what they say. And boy, I didn't have that thing two or three days and it paid for itself. We picked up 260 salmon that dressed out from 30 to 35 pounds. And if it wasn't for that little scanner, I wouldn't have been there.

The radar I had, nobody could keep it running. It was a Bendix and I'd use it two or three times and go in and get it fixed. And while I was getting it fixed, the fishing was good, and I would lose a few ton of fish. So I finally took that off, and just a year before.... Well, I put on a wonderful radar. It was a Super Decca. Turn it on and you'd have a picture right now, showing even smaller objects. And I put that on just the season that I sold the boat. It was 1951, the year they were tearing the Navy hospital down, out Highway 202.[19] Great big hospital. I worked on that all winter, tearing it down. There were quite a few of us from Astoria, and we took turns driving to work. It snowed like the dickens that winter.

The Masons were living alongside us, and we would go out and sled down Commercial Street hill and go clear down into town.[20] The police closed off streets on the sides. It was my turn to use my car to take the guys to work that week; I went up to Uppertown and picked them up and came down. It was right in front of Hauke's store, a stop street, and I stopped and the motor stopped. And wouldn't start. I went into the store and I called a wrecker. And he said, "I'll get there when I can. Everybody seems to be having trouble." And it was about a half-hour before he got there. And you couldn't see our car! The wind covered it clear up with snow. Boy, that was a cold winter.

The End

Notes:

[1] "In January, 1915, the Lifesaving Service was merged with the Revenue Cutter Service to form the Coast Guard within the

Treasury Department. In 1939, the Lighthouse Service became a part of the Coast Guard." Ed Nelson, *Cumtux article*, Summer 1994, page 3.

[2] The spaces under the docks on which much of Astoria was built. Some spaces are present-day stores' basements; others are still open.

[3] See Denise Alborn*'s Cumtux* article on shanghaiing, Winter 1988, page 9.

[4] According to the Clatsop County death records, John C. Reed, a sea captain, was born about 1861 in Lubec, Missouri, the son of John Reed who was born in England. He died February 20, 1938 at Seaside and is buried at Greenwood Cemetery. He died of cancer and an infection of the bones in the cheek and eye area, related to a fracture of the nose sustained forty years previously.

Reedsport, Oregon was named for Captain J.C. Reed's brother, A.W. Reed, its founder and a former state senator. Captain Reed began his career on the Columbia River in 1902 operating the tug *Wallulla* and later the *Oneonta*. He worked on Puget Sound and the Nehalem bar, then was in command of the dredge *Michie* at Coos Bay. For five years, he served as a bar pilot on the Columbia. From the Feb. 21, 1938 *Astoria Evening Budget*.

[5] The house is at 3050 Grand Ave.

[6] We have been unable to confirm this use of the fire station.

[7] See Jim Dennon*'s Cumtux* articles on trolleys, Spring & Summer 1989 issues. Don Van Osdol, whose grandfather, Ross Van Osdol, worked on the trolleys, remembers seeing one of these tools. Don says that it had a large screw-like shape that was turned. Usually two men operated them.

[8] This took place at Clatsop Mill during World War I. See William Kaminski, *Cumtux*, Fall 1989, page 33 for a story about the Spruce Division in WWI.

[9] Louise Bubblitz Northup, his wife, who died October 26, 1997, at Morro Bay, California.

[10] Ralph Scott Mason (1903-1990). He began his water-bourne career in a canoe powered by an outboard motor, hauling freight on the Hoh River in Washington.

[11] According to Philip (Rod) Mason, many fishermen were members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary during WWII.

[12] Robert E. and Margaret Roberta Mason, Ralph's parents.

[13] Charles Mason (1902-1976).

[14] In 1996, the *Ruth R.* was seen moored at Avila Beach, California.

[15] As of summer 1998, the *Destiny*'s home port was Westport, WA. Wilbur had sold it in 1973 to Cecil Jameson, who sold it to a Westport owner.

[16] It was said that Ralph Mason wouldn't hire a deckhand who wore jeans with grommets in them. They scratched the *Memories*' perfectly finished woodwork.

[17] The *Foster* had previously survived both dismasting in a storm off Coos Bay and grounding on a Columbia River sandbar. Mary Mason tells the story of the second incident. Her husband, Phil, was Ralph Mason's brother and deckhand, fishing for shark during the war. (Shark liver was a source of Vitamin A and oil.) On the way back to Astoria to deliver the catch, the *Foster* became stuck on a sand bar. Ralph told Phil to grab the cans of livers and toss them overboard. Then he waited for the next big swell and "gunned" it, thus freeing the vessel.

About 1957, the *Foster* sank off the northern California coast with one man surviving, supposedly a 1936 Olympic swimmer.

[18] Loran is the long range navigation system by which a ship or aircraft can determine its position by radar and radio signals sent from known stations, according to the *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* from 1983.

[19] This is now the site of the Riverpoint Development.

[20] The Phil (1910-1953) and Mary Mason family lived at what is now 124 Commercial Street. The Masons had four children: Rod Mason, Judi Mason Byrd, Kathy Mason, and Dorothy Mason Ramirez. Judi Byrd, who interviewed Wilbur Northup and brother Rod also edited their maternal grandfather's Spanish American War diaries that appeared in the *Kansas State Historical Society Quarterly* in 1970, "A Story of the 22nd Kansas Volunteer Infantry: From the Diary of Samuel Adams." Mary Mason still lives in Astoria.

The Northups lived at what is now 120 Commercial. Wilbur's son Ray and family live in Torrence, California and daughter Jean Roman and family live in Australia. The Northup and Mason families have been close for many years.

Rescue at Sea

by Wilbur Northup

I was fishing out of Gray's Harbor with Ralph Mason on the *Foster* during the war, and the planes would come [out to sea] practicing shooting at targets. On April 1, 1944, one plane was towing a target, and there were two planes shooting at the target. Then one plane came out and circled us, and Ralph said, "I kinda think he wants us to follow him." And so we did.

We picked up the net in a hurry and started running in towards shore. We met this pilot on a little rubber raft. He wasn't there over 25 minutes, I don't think, and he was so cold that he couldn't talk, he couldn't move. He was stiff as a board. We had to drag him off the rubber raft up on the boat.

They sent a crash boat out to pick him up off the *Foster*, and Ralph told the skipper on this crash boat, "It's too rough.[1] I won't be responsible. You're not going to take that man off this boat. We're going to take him in."

So the skipper radioed in to the airport, and they said, "You bring him in." The skipper on that crash boat could really handle that thing. He said, "Get him up on the rail."

Chuck Matteucci and I were on the *Foster* with Ralph. We get this fellow standing on the rail, one on each side. This guy with the crash boat opened those engines up, came in close fast, and — just as he reversed — we gave this fellow a push, and the guys on the crash boat pulled him aboard. It was split-second timing, and if it wasn't, he would've been in the water again!

Later, I found some other "relics" in the ocean. The *Foster's* dragnet brought up a brick-sized packet of Japanese letters, all tied together and covered with barnacles. My sister, Alta Shaube, worked up at the hospital at that time, and the cook there was Japanese. So she took some of the letters for him to read.

"Oh," he said. "They're just private letters." Some of them were written on this paper that has silk threads in it, handwritten with a brush, and then some were written with a Japanese typewriter. And so for each different type of writing, I saved one letter of each. They were tied so tight together, some of the inside ones weren't even wet. The ink never ran.

The End

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[1] The "crash boat" was the U.S. Coast Guard rescue boat #78302, according to an article in an unnamed newspaper from about April 13, 1944.

The following is from an article about the rescue which appeared in the April 13, 1944 *Astoria Budget* newspaper:

"Auxiliaryman Mason is to be highly commended for his prompt and efficient action in saving the life of the Navy pilot, as less prompt action may have resulted in the death of the pilot. It was "a job well done" in the best Coast Guard tradition."

Years later, the airplane was snagged in a net and hauled to the surface. The following article is from a scrapbook with no source given:.

"Astoria, Sept. 21 [1949] - A war time F4F Navy Wildcat fighter plane, its guns loaded and ready for action, was fished from the bottom of the ocean off the Columbia River by the dragboat Broadway late Tuesday.

The plane, covered with sea life and minus its engine, was found in 70 fathoms of water when it was snagged during dragging operations 11 miles southwest of the lightship.

Calvin Johnson, skipper of the

Broadway, said it took his crew two hours to land the big catch. The plane was turned over to the Tongue Point Naval Station authorities.

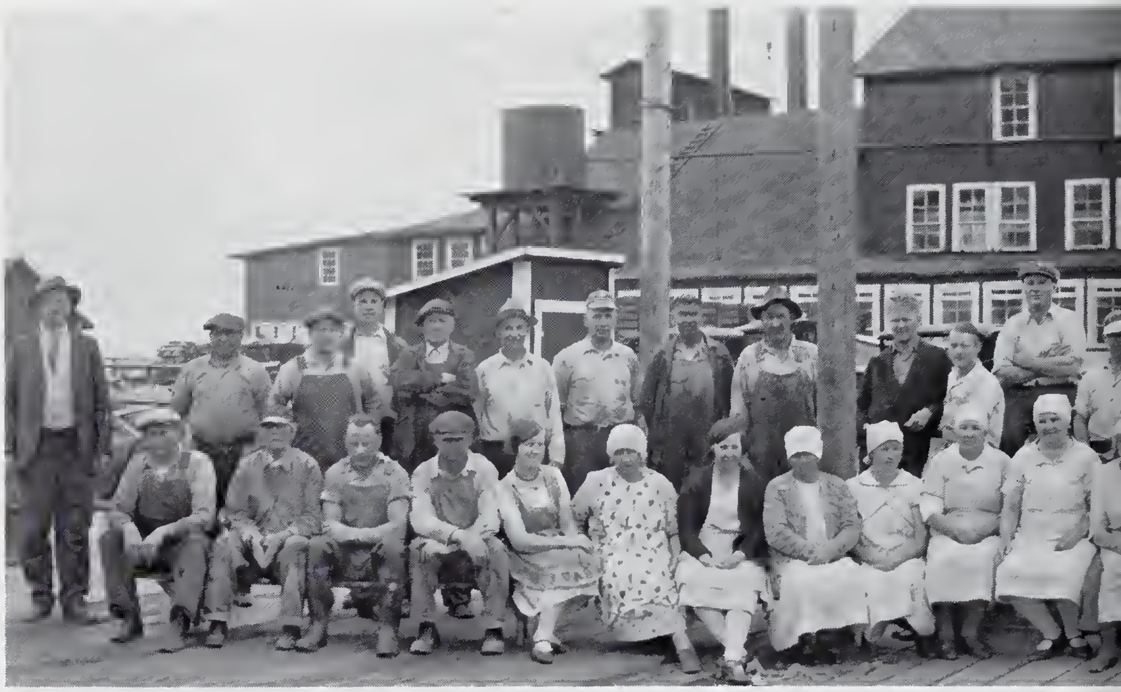
Former naval fliers said the plane was equipped for carrier operations.

The 'greenhouse' canopy over the cockpit was open, indicating to naval authorities that the pilot had escaped from the plane either before or at the time of the crash."

A later article revealed that this was the plane the pilot was on that Wilbur Northup and Ralph Mason rescued in 1944.

From the *Astoria Budget* of April 13, 1944

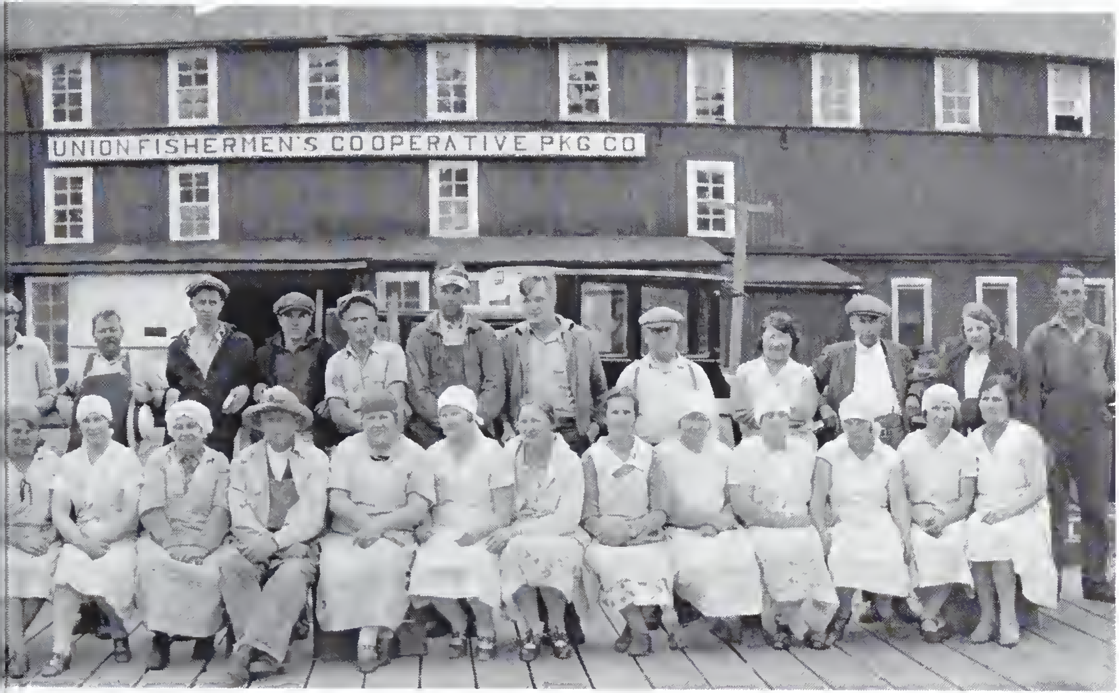
Above is Captain Ralph Mason, skipper of the trolling boat *Foster*, and his crew, Charley Matteucci (left) and Wilber Northup (center), who rescued naval aviator Ensign Wayne M. Erickson when his plane fell into the Pacific, April 1. The *Foster* was fishing nearby when Erickson's medium-sized plane was forced into the sea. Erickson climbed into his life raft before the plane sank, and Mason guided the boat to him at directions of other planes circling the fishing boat and waving directions to the Foster's captain.



Union Fishermen's Cooperative Packing Company, ca 192

Front row: Herman Nyman, machinist; Herman Hendrickson, carpenter, William Urell, m
Niemela?), filler; Hannah Olson, warehouse; Mrs. Salmela, filler; Anna(?) Yrjana, filler; F
Thyra (?) Laine (Ida Maki?), filler, Bieta Hietakangas, filler; Erika Jurvakainen, grader ir
(Mrs. Frank), can factory; Maija Piukkala, can factory; Fanni Saikka, (Sabutski?) filler; S

Back row left to right: John Angberg, superintendent (standing); Kalle Kato, warehouse; V
Adolf Marjaniemi, grader; Matt Wilson (?); Edward Potreck (Wilson?), machinist; Herma
Mortti, butcher; George Kesti, tray caddy; Herbert Haataja, tray caddy; Andrew Pyhtila,
warehouse chief; William Hendrickson, launch captain; Matt Wilson, launch captain; Gus
Nikka, warehouse labeler; William Larson, warehouse.


UNION FISHERMEN'S COOPERATIVE PKG CO

CCHS Photo

re; Robert Rahkonen, mild cure; Martha Korpela, warehouse label; Hulda Reini (or Ida Olson (Mrs. Potreck?), filler; Mrs. Ervasti (or Potreck?), filler; George Kesti, tray caddy; or; Richard Riipa, chief grader; Sarah Kemi, filler; Lydia Hendrickson, filler; Mary Bay Niemi (Mrs. Arvo), filler; Anna(?) Tormanen; Fiina Niemi, filler; Elli Jouppila, filler.

Johnson, machine shop; Adolph Wilson, warehouse; Charles Stillwright, chief machinist; son, fireman; Fred Onkka, can factory; George Kanto (Harris?), can factory; Eino rriage; Clyde Angberg, can supply; Carl Potreck, machinist assistant; Aldevan Niemi, ormanen, salt feed machine; Mildred Dibb, warehouse labeler; John Niemi, grader; Hulda

Riding Out the Columbus Day Storm

October 12, 1962

By Wilbur Northup

My wife, Louise, was my deckhand for 22 years — and she was a good one, too. She did the cooking; and we would have contests pulling albacore, and she could pull them just as fast as I could. She was too short to lift a heavy albacore aboard, so she would drag it over the rail and sometimes it would come off the hook and get down in the cockpit and just about beat her to death by the time she could get out of there or get ahold of it and get it up on deck.

We pulled 16¼ ton of albacore in six days. In a 46-foot boat, that's a load! When we got in to Eureka, our deck was only about two inches out of the water. And we went through the Columbus Day Storm with that load of fish on it. The Coast Guard said it was blowing 120 miles an hour down by Blunt's Reef, about three hours south of Eureka.

The *Destiny* is a good boat. The fellow and his dad that built it, built it for themselves, and so that boat was all bolted together. The only part that was nailed was the deck and the planking. All of the framework was bolted. And you never saw such big timbers in a boat in all your life. I never did. The engine bed, the big timbers that the engine sat on, were 10" x 18", and they reached right from the bow clear back three feet into the fish hold.

We started taking on water and I found out what the cause of it was. Being so heavy, we had about a foot of water in the cockpit. It was blowing so hard! The water sloshed back and forth, and took some of the caulking and started going down in the fish hold. My alarm rang, so I had to find out where it was coming from. The reason that it took the caulking out was because I'd plugged the drain holes in the cockpit, to give me more buoyancy. The cockpit covers were not tight, and the water kept coming over 'till it finally filled the cockpit. I pumped the water out, what I could get out.

We laid off of Blunt's Reef just below Eureka for five hours, alongside the *Signe S.*[1] He was sinking; he didn't have a self-bailing cockpit. When the water came over into his cockpit, it went down into the fish hold, and he had to pump the water out. And then his pump quit.

We had got there just at daylight in the morning, and he wanted us to come over and take him and his deckhand off the boat. He said that they were going to have to let her go. I said, "Well, I'm not going to let Louise get out there on the bow to throw you a rope," and I said, "I can't leave the wheel, so what we gonna do?" And I said, "You're downwind from me, so I can keep the [pilothouse] door open and watch you. Just stop and both of you get down in the fish hold and throw your fish overboard as fast as you can."

I called the Coast Guard and talked them into coming down there, and a plane came down from Port Angeles. They couldn't see us because of the storm, but every fifteen minutes they would have me talk to them to take bearings on, so they stayed right above us.

Our neighbor got rid of his fish, and the *Signe S.* was lighter then. He stayed up on top of the water and it saved the boat. And we both "rode it out."

We never had to take any emergency measures in bad weather, only to fasten things down and put our poles up. I never worried about the *Destiny* any time. In one blow, there were two fleets of albacore fishing boats, one way offshore of San Francisco, where we were, and another one was in fairly close. It looked like there was gonna be nasty weather, so I told Louise, "The fishing isn't any better here than it is in there; let's go in closer to shore." So we went in, laid there that night.

About two o'clock in the morning, Louise got up and she said, "You'd better get up and take a look. It's all white outside." The *Destiny*'s house was forward and it was deeper in the water in the stern, so it acted like a pendulum. The harder the wind blew, the more it stuck the stern into the wind, and we were floating like a duck. So I went to sleep again.

After a while she got up and she said, "I think we'd better go in. We're not going to be able to fish for a while."

So we ran into Oakland. We got in there along in the afternoon. We were just tying up and a big schooner from Seattle came in — in fact, it was named *Seattle*. And he tied along the stern of five of us smaller boats.

Louise went down to take his lines to tie him up. And this Scandinavian fellow said, "Boy, it's a good thing you weren't out there in that tiny boat; it was not a place for man nor beast!"

So we said, "We just got in!"

There were 22 fishermen that were drowned in one blow. I don't remember anybody drowning [in the Columbus Day Storm], and it was so much worse than any we've ever been in.[2]

The End

Notes:

[1] The skipper was John Grotting, whom Wilbur assisted at sea another time. He later died in a galley fire aboard his boat.

[2] One fisherman was swept off his boat off the coast of Northern California in the Columbus Day Storm of October 12th, 1962.

Going It Alone

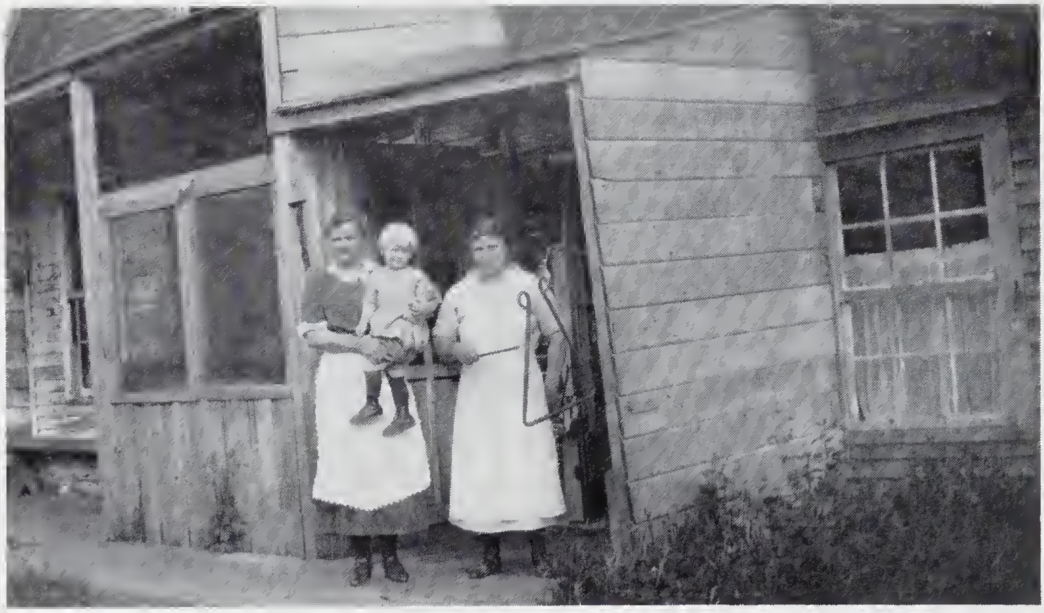
By Wilbur Northup

One summer, years ago, I was out fishing off Southern California with my son, Ray, as deckhand. The fishing was good and before we knew it, it was time for Ray to go back to school. So, we went in, and I put him on a bus to go to Astoria.

My usual rule was not to go on the boat alone, but that time I decided the weather looked good and I'd go ahead and bring the boat back home to Astoria by myself. Just to be on the safe side, I called the Coast Guard and asked them to keep an eye out for me.

When I got down off the southern Oregon coast, an awful storm came up real fast. The wind tore one of my trolling poles loose and it was banging against the pilot house, so I put on a life jacket and went outside to try to secure it. Then, the wind got me too! And over I went into the water. I had to fight to get my head clear of the water and when I did, a big bright light hit me right in the face. It was a Coast Guard boat's searchlight. Boy, was I glad to see them. They threw me a line and got me out of there and back on the *Destiny*. They loaned me a young fellow to help secure my poles and get safely into port.

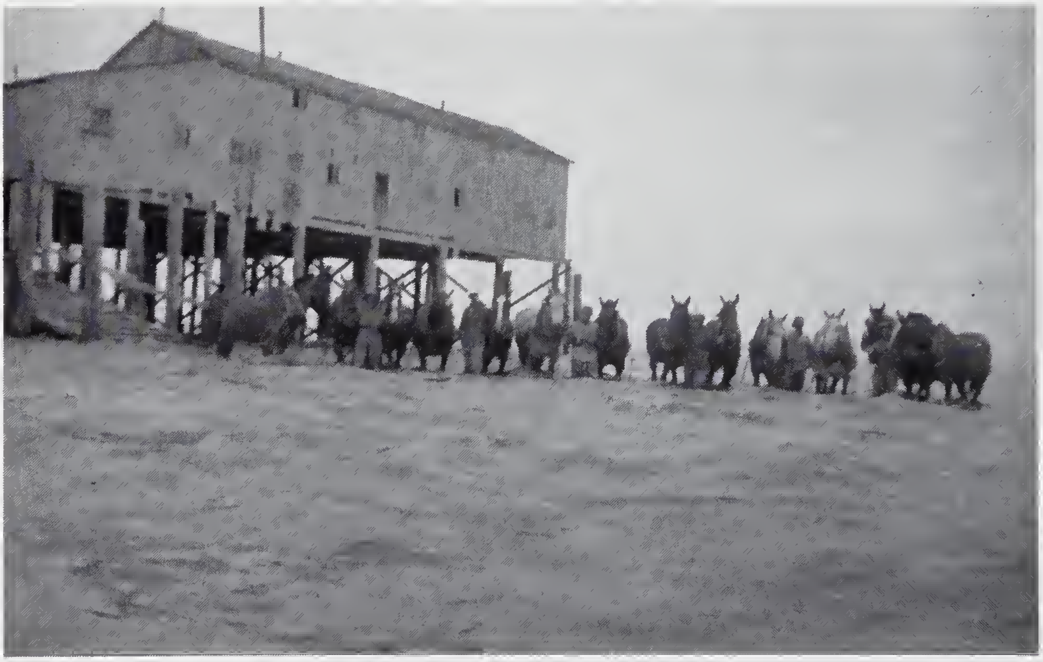
I never told my wife about this. I made the few folks I told about it swear they would never tell her and, as far as I know, they never did.✯



Above: Mary Ranta, Mildred Anderson (later Jones) and Ilma Anderson at H. & B. seining grounds, about 1932.

Below: The cookhouse and men's quarters at Meehan Sands seining grounds on the Columbia River, about 1936 or 1937. Below are the teamsters with their horses.

Photographs courtesy of Viola Abrahamson



Ilma Anderson: Seining Ground Cook

By Viola Anderson Abrahamson

Fishing season (May 1st to August 25th) was always a very important time for many people along the Columbia River.

Mother, Ilma Anderson, cooked for fishermen for many years. When I was young, before my sisters were born, she cooked at the mess house in Alderbrook at the foot of 50th and Birch streets. The fishermen lived in rooms above the cook house and in small cabins nearby. Most of these men fished for Columbia River Packers Association or Union Fish. At the end of the street was a boat yard with a boat slip into the Columbia River, also net racks and fish boats.

Mother cooked here for several seasons, made all the bread and all the other baked goods. There were about thirty men to feed. Each Sunday morning, many of the men had five gallon size covered buckets which Mother filled with bread and other things the men took to their boats for food when they were away from meals. A Chinese man would come by with his horse and buggy to sell vegetables.

We spent the summers here. I think I was five to seven years old. We had two bedrooms. I slept in the room with Mom and Dad and the waitress had the other room. One of the helpers here was Saimi Korhonen Pesio who now lives in Clatskanie, a dear friend. I spent a lot of time on the beach and visiting Mrs. Johan (Anni) Peterson who lived near.

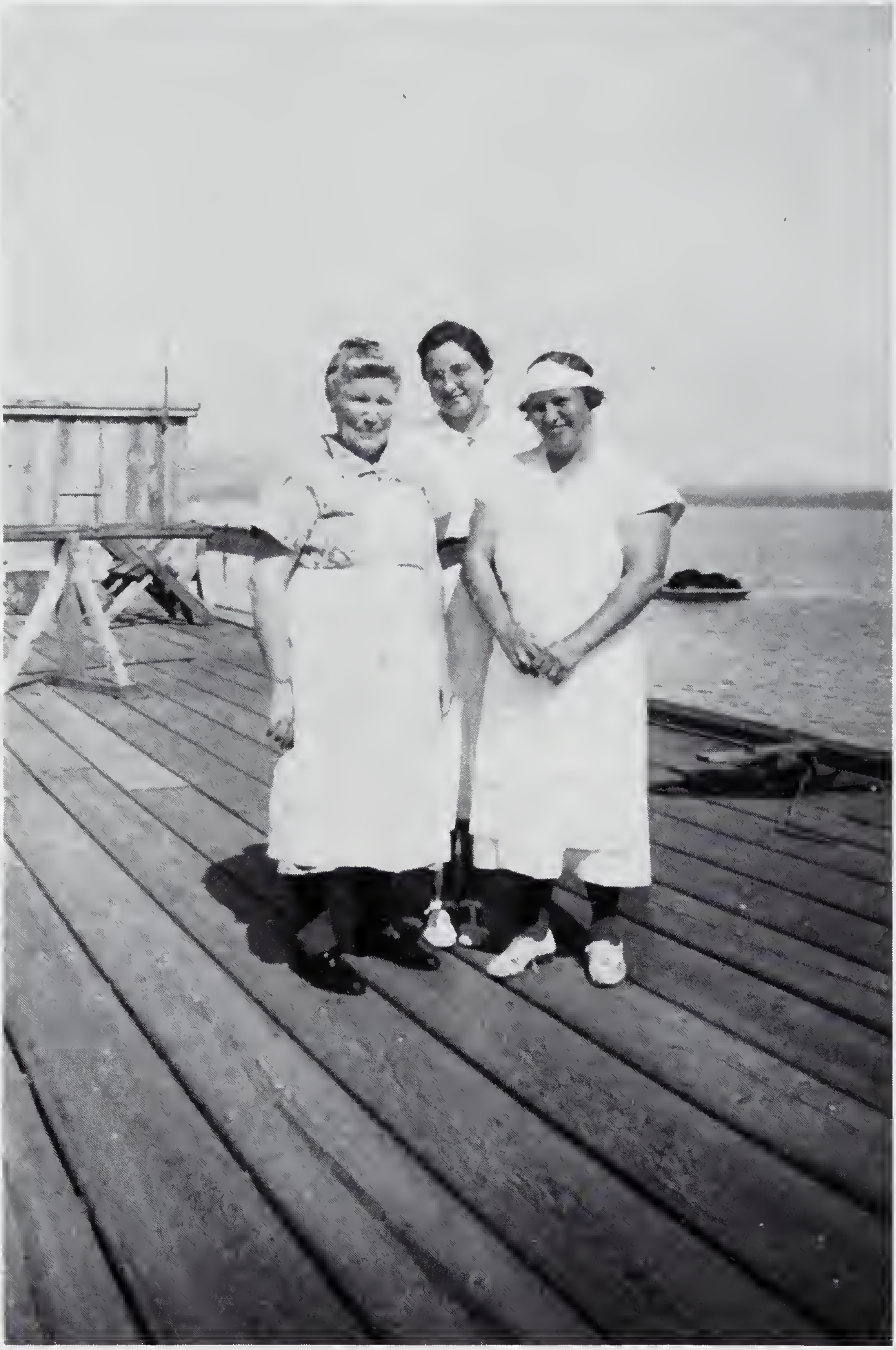
Mother took time off one summer to have sister Mildred. By the end of the summer she was back at the mess house and was there until Mildred was six years old.

About 1932, Mother was asked to cook for H. & B. near Quincy, Oregon.[1] I remember that spring, when Mother prepared to go cook there. She packed her white dresses, white aprons, comfortable shoes, bedding and her personal favorite utensils. Mildred was six years old or maybe seven and went to school in Quincy. I stayed in Astoria at friends to finish the school year. Mother's assistant was Mary Ranta (grandmother of Astoria's current city councilman Douglas Thompson). At the end of May when school let out, I went to join Mother by taking the sternwheeler, the *Georgiana*, which stopped at the dock at H. & B.

Mother cooked there for thirty or thirty-five men. Some were teamsters; there were two boat captains and the rest were workers, including many young men who worked summers so they could attend college. This was true of all the seining grounds.

The food was all prepared from scratch, no package stuff. She ordered groceries a week in advance. One week, she ordered a half of a pork and the next, a quarter of a beef, and at least once a week, usually on Fridays, they had salmon, steaks or baked. Every morning, there was bacon or ham, eggs, hotcakes, and sometimes cooked cereal. The only dry cereal I remember was cornflakes.

For the main meal, she fixed boiled, baked, or mashed potatoes with real butter and whole milk. Meat was pork chops, beef steaks, roasts or the fish. Mother made fresh doughnuts, one week raised, the next plain. Imagine dipping the dough in hot oil on a coal burning stove! Every day except



Courtesy of Viola Abrahamson

Mrs. Hein (a visitor from Goble), Viola Anderson (later Abrahamson), and Ilma Anderson at Meehan Sands, about 1936 or 1937.

Sunday, she made five pies, and cookies or cake for dessert. She made all the bread, white and dark, five to six loaves about every other day.

Meals were prepared according to the tides, as they determined when the nets were put out. One week, breakfast was at 4:30 a.m. and the next, much later. There were usually two tides to fish every other week. This was the routine for the season.

We were at H. & B. for one and a half summers. We did not come home to Astoria during that time.

The following summer, she was asked to cook at Meehan Sands near Altoona, Washington. We moved there in early July. We were closer to home and could now go to Astoria every other weekend for sauna and to visit. Meehan Sands was on pilings and all drinking and cooking water was brought from Altoona.

Some men would cut the meat and others brought in the wash and kindling. If there was salmon, some men would clean it. But mother did the slicing and if it was baked, she did that.

Most of the vegetables used were canned: peas, corn, green beans, and tomatoes. We did get fresh carrots and cabbage. Fruit was also canned in gallon cans: peaches, apples, apricots and cherries. The men were fed very well.

It was my job to prepare the potatoes, about 25 pounds every morning plus the other vegetables. I washed the breakfast dishes and Mother washed them for the other meals. When she baked, I washed the utensils.

Dishes were washed by hand with hot river water, heated by coils in the stove. A large wooden tank was above the stove. The floors were wooden and we washed them with hot soapy lye water and rinsed them with water from the river.

Washing clothes was done by using a wash barrel and washboard and ironing with irons heated on the cook stove. The stove was large, mostly heated by coal.

Our sleeping quarters was a two bedroom unit separate from the bunkhouse, with a one hole-toilet. In our spare time, we took short naps, read and did a lot of embroidering. It was sort of primitive living, but we all enjoyed the summers.

Mildred spent a few summers with relatives in Winlock, Washington. Sister Bernice was quite young. It is amazing how she did not fall off into the river because there was no fence. The only kind of recreation for Bernice and Mildred later was to swim. They also learned to mend net (small holes) and of course, to spend hours fishing. There were small holes in the kitchen floor and they used net strings with safety pins for hooks and would catch hundreds of suckers. Of course, they had to keep count to see who caught the most, but the fish were always released.

Mildred helped Mother as waitress after the fall of 1936 when I entered St. Mary's school of nursing. We agree that it was hard work and we didn't get much of a vacation.

Mother cooked on the seining grounds until they were outlawed in 1949.❀

[1] The H. & B. seining grounds belonged to Thomas Hodgkins and L.W. Ball.

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Ilma was born in Finland, married Walter Anderson in South Bend, Washington, and lived for a while in the Raymond, Washington area. After moving to Astoria, she went to night school at J. J. Astor Junior High School to learn English. Walter and Ilma lived to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. See the Spring 1997 Cumtux *for more about Viola's family.*

In the Spring 1997 (Vol. 28, No. 1) issue of the Columbia River Gillnetter, *Cecil Moberg reminisced about life on the seining grounds, noting that Mrs. Walter Anderson was "famous for her cooking." The magazine is published in Astoria by Don Riswick for the Columbia River Fishermen's Protective Union.*

Courtesy of the Oregon State University Seafoods Laboratory

Duncan Law examining the bacterial load of raw salmon byproducts used in fish feed at the Astoria Food Industries Laboratory in Astoria about 1945 or 1946.

WHAT IS THE OREGON PELLET?

By Duncan Law

Many Astoria citizens and businesses, with the cooperation of the local fishing industry, shared in the development of the Oregon Pellet. Yet, few of the general public know what it is. Is it a rabbit food or a fertilizer? The truth of the matter is that it can be either of these but its main function is as fish food, for which it has been notably effective.

The development of a good pelleted food for salmon has changed the face of salmon aquaculture and aquaculture of many other species completely. The old feeding method used in Oregon salmon hatcheries was called the "bucket and slop method." It was this "bucket and slop method" I was introduced to when Dr. Don McKernan, the director of research at the time for the old Oregon Fish Commission, asked Professor Russell O. Sinnhuber, of the Oregon State University Seafood Laboratory and me to work on a feed for the salmon hatcheries of Oregon. This was in the late forties. At the time, I was just a research assistant working under the tutelage of Professor Sinnhuber who was not only my mentor but a close personal friend. What an exciting research challenge this was! During this early period each hatchery was virtually its own fiefdom with no coordinated feed plan. It was then that I learned from Reed White and Cliff Ritter, superintendents of the Klaskanine and Big Creek hatcheries respectively, what the "bucket and slop method" really was. Very simply it was ground up salmon and animal byproducts loosely bound together with a small percentage of salt. Salmon by-products consisted mainly of visceral material and other salmon parts not used in commercial processing.

In those early days the most common grinder used in the hatchery systems of Oregon was the Autio grinder, which was invented and developed by Paul Autio at his mink ranch in Knappa. The formula most often used was one-third salmon by-products, one-third beef liver, and one-third hog liver, plus a little salt which caused the raw salmon by-products to have a binding effect. Sometimes other animal ingredients were used, such as horsemeat. The ground ingredients were well mixed and put into buckets.

At feeding time, a hatchery worker would take a bucket of this slurry and fill the cup of a long handled ladle with it. The hatchery worker then sloshed the slurry with considerable flourish down the concrete raceways that held the fish. Inevitably, a fair amount of the slurry splashed onto the concrete walls, necessitating a continual program of raceway cleanup. Thus the term "bucket and slop method" was born.

When Professor Sinnhuber (I'll refer to him as Russ from here on) and I examined the diets being fed, we both knew an untouched area of research lay before us. First of all, a substitute for beef and hog liver had to be found. Increasing public awareness of the nutritional value of beef liver fostered better methods of quality control during slaughter house processing so more liver could be available for human consumption. This made the economics of using beef and hog liver as fish food questionable. Additionally, other sources of animal protein such as wild horse meat dwindled. The initial direction of our research was to develop other ingredient sources. Little did we know it would be much more than that.

FOOD INDUSTRIES LABORATORY
OREGON AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

Courtesy of the Oregon State University Seafoods Laboratory

The old laboratory where Duncan Law did much of his research. It was located in west Astoria on what is now the driveway for the U.S. Coast Guard Store. The building stood until about 1967 when Prairie Market was built. Three staff members and a secretary worked here along with graduate students from Oregon State College.

A breakthrough

As Russ and I examined fish diets being used throughout the world, we were astonished to find very few universally effective ones for raising fish. To make matters worse, the feed conversions most hatcheries were getting were appalling. Feed conversions are simply the amount of food consumed to make a pound of fish. It took about eight to ten pounds of feed to grow a pound of fish. With increasing ingredient costs, hatchery economics were a serious concern. In the hatcheries we visited, the reason for poor feed conversion was obvious. We could see the loss of nutrients when the slurry mixed with the water. The slurry formed a cloudy wake making vision through the raceway water impenetrable.

Having had a number of courses in microbiology, it occurred to me that such nutrient laden water could be a hotbed for bacterial growth that might be harmful to the salmon. Bacterial growth! Harmful to salmon! Suddenly it hit me why many salmon hatcheries were not getting the returns they expected. In some cases, hatcheries were releasing millions of fish, not because it was time for them to leave, but because they were obviously too sick to live. It occurred to me that one factor causing the fish to become sick was that most hatcheries were feeding salmon fingerling raw salmon byproducts. No other animal industry feeds the carcasses of their dead animals back to the live young of those animal without first processing those carcasses. The ground parts of one sick fish, unless treated, could easily contaminate large amounts of fish feed.

However, all I had at this time was conjecture. How could I prove this hypothesis? My first thought was to heat the raw salmon ingredients and then place the heat-treated ingredients into the diet. How simple that would have been! But cooking the salmon resulted in two very obvious drawbacks. The binding capacity of the raw salmon and salt was lost, and perhaps an even a more important factor was that cooking seemed to have a negative affect on the " taste buds" of the young salmon. At least that was my personal bias when I remembered the negative effects poached liver had on my children! When my children were little, as fast as I could put a teaspoon of cooked liver in their mouth it would come back at me as spray that covered my eyeglasses.

This analogy between little fish and little children appeared to be confirmed when a small amount of the cooked salmon by-products, which consisted mainly of fish liver and liver-like material, was fed to the fingerling. I would drop in about an eighth of a teaspoon of the cooked salmon which the fingerling would suck in and then immediately expel in a cloudy dispersion. After pondering over this development, it occurred to me that perhaps the "bad taste" could be minimized by a pasteurizing process like used in the milk industry.

I set about to learn the rudimentary techniques of milk pasteurization from Lawrence Blue, a technician with the Lower Columbia Dairy Coop. Lawrence suggested that I try a "shell and tube system" of pasteurization since fish had particles that might clog other systems. I discussed this problem with Phil Jann, a chemical engineer working with Bioproducts, a local by-product processing plant. Phil told me shell and tube systems were nothing more than a series of tubes encased in a large tube to which one could pump hot water or some other heating medium. These systems were so simple that Phil actually made me one for test purposes. To test the system, I pumped the ground salmon viscera through the tubes and pumped hot water through the large single tube which held the bundle of smaller tubes. The system worked! We were able to bring salmon viscera to the same pasteurization temperature used in treating milk without, visibly at least, changing the texture of the salmon ingredient.

The next crucial step was to find out whether fish would eat this pasteurized material. We were in luck! Not only did the heat treated salmon viscera retain its binding quality but the little fish seemed to love it. Still the "proof of the pudding" was if this pasteurizing process would lower the incidence of disease. An immediate test was made comparing the raw salmon product versus its pasteurized counterpart. Each of the groups was marked so that we could recognize it.

Unfortunately, we had to wait for the completed life cycle of our test fish to find this out. In this instance coho salmon were the test fish which have a life cycle of three years; one year at the hatchery and two years in the ocean. So, for two years, we waited with bated breath for the results. Of course, corroborative tests were being run while we awaited the first test results. Though time seemed to crawl, the fish finally finished their two year odyssey at sea.

As we examined and tabulated the returning adult fish, we experienced a growing feeling of euphoria. The fish fed raw salmon showed 90% infection, while those fed pasteurized salmon had less than 25% infection!

Our task now was to turn this laboratory pilot operation into practical reality. For this, I turned to Lou Lund, Bumble Bee Seafood's refrigeration engineer who said that it would be a piece of cake to cobble up a system that could handle the large scale production we were asking for. True to his word, Lou devised a system just as we wanted and even improved it by adding a recording temperature gauge that would guarantee each sack of product would be properly pasteurized. (See illustration)

For some time, Bumble Bee furnished the Oregon Fish Commission with tons of pasteurized salmon byproducts, and only once was there a glitch. What a smelly glitch it was! I had told the workers at Bumble Bee to be sure and cool the sacks of "pasteurized fish guts" to at least 80 degrees before they put it into the freezer. The pasteurization temperature of 142 degrees Fahrenheit, which I had recommended, killed only the more heat sensitive bacteria. Heat resistant bacteria would start growing again if conditions were right. Only once did they not heed my advice and they paid dearly for not doing so. The workers stacked sacks of very warm pasteurized fish into the freezer. The sacks on the outer edges of the pile froze through fairly quickly. The sacks in the middle of the stack retained their heat for a much longer period. To further compound the problem, as the outer edges of the product began to freeze, it formed an insulation barrier for the warm material in the center sacks. Bacteria in this warm nutrient material began to rapidly multiply and to give off a noxious gas at the same time. In a short time a number of the incompletely frozen sacks of fish became biological bombs. When the critical point of pressure was reached, the sacks exploded. The next time workers entered the freezer they found the stench overwhelming and pasteurized fish bedecked much of the walls of the freezer. Hot sacked fish was never again put in the freezer!!

The real "break through," however, was still that research had found a way to combat certain fish diseases transmitted by their food supply. Today, as far as I know, all raw fisheries products to be used in the United States for fish food are pasteurized. In the late 70s when I visited Japan's aquaculture facilities, I was surprised to learn much of the fish they used for fish food was not pasteurized. To me, it was no coincidence certain fish diseases were on the rise. I do not know if they still use raw fish in their feeding programs.

First phase in pellet development

Although the discovery of a pasteurization method for raw fish was very valuable, it did not provide the answer to supplying other dietary food sources. In this regard, while I was working on the development of the pasteurization system, Russ was busily developing a synthetic test diet. We called it a "synthetic diet" because its ingredients were made of standard manufactured materials which always could be duplicated to insure any test results could be reproduced. Fish did not need to like the "synthetic diet" as long as they would eat it and would grow. Cost of this diet was very high, but cost was not of a primary concern since we were only experimenting with small numbers of test fish. The "synthetic diet" would never be used commercially. It merely served as our control. Our plan was to substitute a portion of the "synthetic diet" with various ingredients to give us an idea of how each ingredient we tested ranked in nutritional quality, economic availability and, very importantly, whether the ingredient tasted good to the fish.

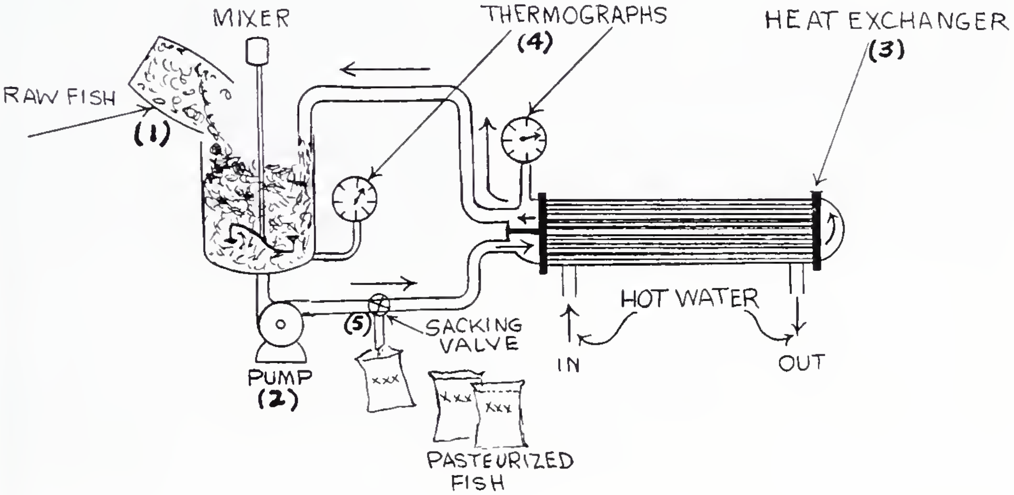
Developing a synthetic diet was no simple chore. It had to hold together as we were formulating it as well as in the water. It had to be nutritionally well balanced and most importantly, the fish had to be willing to eat it. Russ and I looked at all sorts of fish diets and even the diets of fish in the wild to get an idea of the nutritional balance the fish had to have. Russ finally devised a synthetic ration which approached the criteria we had set. Using the synthetic ration as control, we added various blocks of ingredients to achieve our first goal of adding to the ingredient base as to what could be used by the hatcheries.

Our description of this research program would not be complete without giving credit to the Oregon Fish Commission who were our partners in this research. Tom McKee, Wally Hublou, John Westgate, and Dave Leith were the lead men at the test facilities who fed the fish and did all the other biological aspects of the testing which included charting the growth and weight gain, mortality, blood picture, as well as general observations of the test fish.

The ingredients of the test dietary mix were screened so that upon mixing, a mass with the consistency like bread dough was formed. We forced the dough through a common household ricer to make little worm-like extrusions which we cut off to appropriate lengths and fed to the test fish. This worked well and the results enabled us to acquire an extensive inventory of usable ingredients. It was interesting to note that fish were quite picky on their likes and dislikes. Most of the fish did not like soy bean meal. In fact, many salmon fingerling would rather die than eat it. On the other hand they loved and thrived on tuna butchering by-products. This was an economic boon for those plants canning tuna, because, up to then, tuna waste had very little value. Canneries had been selling tuna waste for two dollars per ton. When it was found to be of value as fish food, the price skyrocketed to one hundred dollars per ton.

Even though we had found a number of substitutes for beef liver and other hard to get ingredients to be used in fish food, it was apparent that the old "bucket and slop" method needed to be improved or replaced. The loss of nutrients in the water made the pounds of food needed to grow a pound of fish more costly than it should have been. However, Russ reasoned if a pellet could be developed that would not leach its ingredients, the fingerling salmon would get the entire nutrition of the feed. This in turn would give us the desired improved conversion economics (pounds of food to raise a pound of fish).

A moist pellet was used in preference to a dry pellet because it was found that salmon, particularly chinook salmon, seemed to prefer moist diets. There is controversy to this day as to the merits of a dry diet versus a moist diet. Our first attempts to make pellets were moderately successful but it was evident we needed a good binder and



Courtesy of Duncan Law

Pasteurization system devised by Lou Lund at the Bumble Bee cold storage plant to the specifications given to him by the researchers of the Seafoods Lab. Raw fish (1) is dumped into vat and the mass uniformly mixed. Pump (2) forces the raw fish through the heat exchanger (3). The temperature of the fish being treated is recorded by thermographs (4) and when the batch of fish being treated has been heated to the pasteurization temperature and for the required time, the fish is sacked at sacking valve (5). Most all the harmful bacteria and viruses are killed when pumped through the heated tubes for the required time while the velocity of the flow prevents the cooking of the fish being pumped.

a better mechanical way to form the pellets. It was just too labor intensive to press the doughy mixture though a potato ricer and, in addition, by feeding the larger amounts of rations, we ruined about one ricer per week. The doughy mixture Russ and I had developed was the material that ruined all the hand ricers we used. It was during this period that we hired a cannery worker named Charles Jow. Though "Chuck," as everyone called him, had very little formal schooling, his innate understanding of engineering was amazing. We had originally hired him to be a janitor but quickly changed his position to developmental technician. In no time at all Chuck put together a meat grinder which extruded the heavy dough through 1/8 inch holes. Of course the long spaghetti-like extrusions had to be cut to the proper size but Chuck solved this problem by dropping the spaghetti strings into a fan of just the right speed so the extrusions came out as bite size pellets for the fish. Now it was time for a large scale feeding trial. Bumble Bee Seafoods agreed to make the pellets and to supply the pasteurized fish portion of the diet. We contracted with a Portland feed supplier to make the dry mix. The next step was to find a large mixer, grinder, and a fan that would turn at the proper speed to cut the pellets. Bumble Bee appointed Scott McLeod, who was then the director of their research department, to do this work. "Scotty" was able to find the necessary equipment and adapted it to make pellets so well, we were able to make several tons of pellet to conduct our first large-scale hatchery feeding trials.

Fish sunburn in Astoria?

Our laboratory feeding trials had been such a success, we had not anticipated any problems on our large scale feeding trials. We brought the ration to Reed White at Klaskanine hatchery and he allocated 80,000 fish for the feeding trial. These were divided into groups of 40,000 fish per raceway. Reed fed these fingerling the pellets and was favorably impressed by the ease of feeding with no dirtying of the raceway walls. It was obvious that very little nutrition was being lost, as the water remained quite clear throughout the feedings.

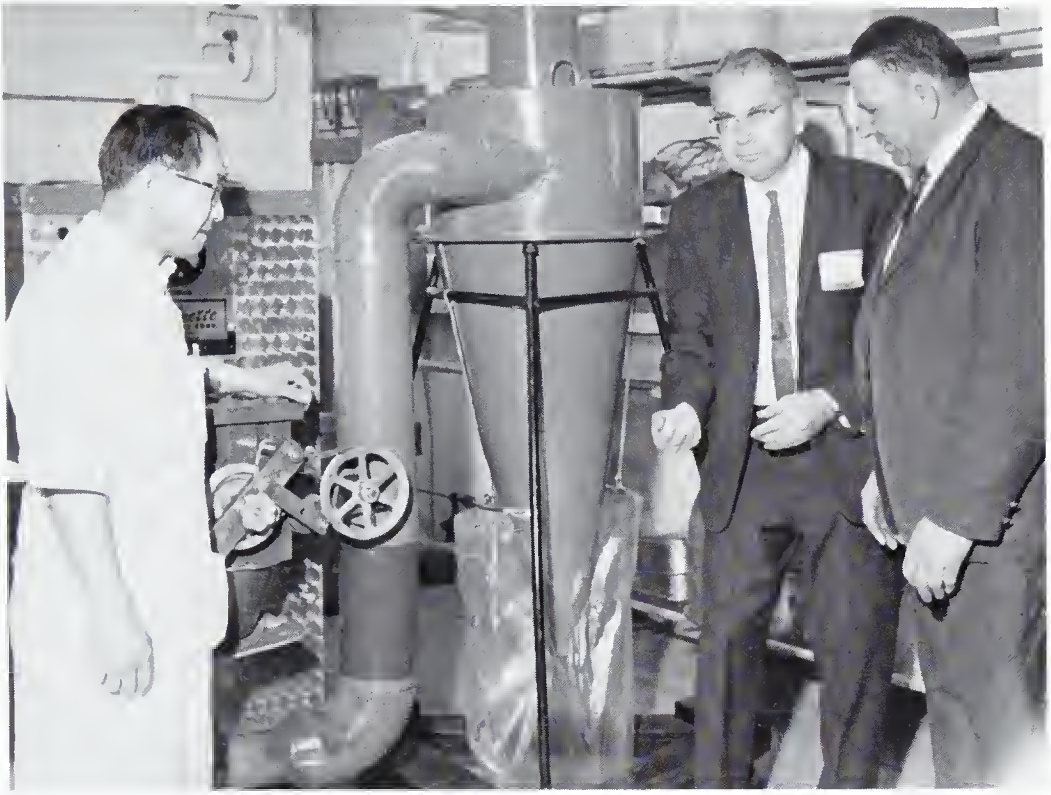
Four days later, Reed called us and said we had better get ready to haul away 80,000 dead fish!! All our test fish were in bad shape and floating around the surface like they were very sick. The backs of the fish were all red and becoming raw. We told Reed to stop feeding the diet immediately while we searched for an explanation. Several fisheries pathology laboratories were contacted and the consensus of the pathologist, from the symptoms we described, indicated our fish were suffering from "sun burn," When we told Reed these diagnoses, he exploded. "What kind of food did you guys make? A couple of rare days of sunshine in Astoria and all the fish get sunburned!"

Reed was right. Something in our diet was making the fish sensitive to light, for when we put a group of fish away from any light source, their backs quickly returned to normal. The fish not shielded were slow to recover but fortunately the mortality was low. Obviously it was something the fish had eaten, but what could be in our diet causing this weird reaction?

All ingredients had been thoroughly tested, although one phase of the formulation was not completely under our control. This phase was the dry meal mix we had contracted to a miller who made the mix according to our specifications. We asked the miller if his machinery might have contaminated the meal mix. His reply that he was sure his machinery was clean for he had put a load of walnut shells to scour out his equipment before he had handled our mix.

Nonetheless, Russ suspected the contaminant was in the mix the miller had made. He researched the literature for light sensitizing substances and found a chemical called "phenothiazine" that is also commonly used to deworm sheep. Sheep are relatively unaffected because their skin is shielded by a heavy coat of wool. Russ asked the miller if he had mixed any of this type of medication prior to mixing our material. The miller admitted he had mixed medicated feed but he was adamant the mill was clean. He said the walnut shells he used for cleaning left everything spotless and shiny and, as far as he was concerned, there could not have been medication left on the equipment.

Russ and I immediately set forth to find a test for phenothiazine and, with Russ's expertise in analytical organic chemistry, we devised a simple method to quan tify the amount of phenothiazine in the feed. The miller had made quite a number of batches and each batch had a specific number. We were able to get test quantities from each batch. Using the test method that Russ and I had devised we were able to detect greater than 1% phenothazine in the meal mix. This was clearly enough to cause the sunlight sensitization the fish were exhibiting.



Courtesy of the Oregon State University Seafoods Laboratory

Chuck Jow, Professor Russell Sinnhuber, and fisherman George Moskovita examine the pellets formed by the Ambrette pasta machine. Chuck has his arm on the "Chinese puzzle box" he developed to trap the pellets as they came out of the extruder and were cut by a whirling blade.

When we presented this data to the miller, he went back to his equipment and meticulously examined each part of his mixer. He was horrified to find large amounts of the offending chemical on the undersides of the mixer screw. The walnut shells had indeed scraped the surface of the mixer screw clean but did not touch the undersides of the screw where an accumulation of the chemical had remained.

The miller apologized profusely and offered to mix us a new batch of meal. Although we probably could have demanded compensation for time lost and extra effort required to solve the problem, we chose not to do so, for if an immediate new supply of meal was furnished us, we still had time to continue the large scale experimental feeding trial. From this point, the test went on without a hitch clear through the time of release.

Courtesy of the Oregon State University Seafoods Laboratory

Wallace F. Hublou, Duncan K. Law, Mrs. Paul Mellon, Secretary of State Stewart Udall, I.J. Coury, and Lawrence E. Thorderson on January 26, 1966, when Duncan Law, Russ Sinnhuber, Tom McKee, and Wally Hublou received the United States Department of the Interior Conservation Service Award for our work on the Oregon Pellet.

Phenothiazine strikes again

An interesting sidelight as to how "phenothiazine" entered my personal life occurred when my oldest son, Robbie, came down with the most bizarre symptoms. He complained he didn't feel well and his tongue seemed like it was getting thick. His speech soon became very slurred and his hands went into spasms which curved into claw-like positions. We hurriedly brought him to the emergency room at the old Columbia hospital in Astoria where he was seen by our family physician, Dr. Ed Palmrose. At the hospital, the symptoms slowly disappeared but Dr. Palmrose told us he would refer us to Doernbecher hospital in Portland if the symptoms reappeared. In a few days those same symptoms reappeared so we rushed Robbie to Portland with the referral to Doernbecher hospital. The doctors at Doernbecher were as baffled as Dr. Palmrose. This time the symptoms were a little slower going away. A series of tests revealed nothing so Robbie was released. A week or so later the symptoms again appeared so we made a hurried trip back to Doernbecher. This time extensive tests were done but they again revealed nothing. The Doernbecher doctors made a tentative diagnosis of "idiopathic epilepsy," a term used for epilepsy of unknown cause. We were given a medication to control this condition but Robbie was extremely allergic to the medication and we stopped using it, hoping the strange symptoms would not recur. They did not. Several months later, we received an excited phone call from Dr. Palmrose. He told us he had found the cause of Robbie's symptoms and it wasn't an illness at all. It was a drug reaction! He had just come back from a medical seminar and had learned that in some children, the drug "compazine," used to curb nausea, caused the exact symptoms that Robbie had displayed, and he remembered having prescribed compazine for nausea that Robbie was having just a few weeks before he had exhibited those frightening symptoms. Compazine is the name used by pharmaceutical companies when prescribed for human usage but its generic name is phenothiazine, the same chemical that had made all our test fish photosensitive. What an amazing coincidence!

The Ambrette machine

Though the large scale fish feeding trials were clearly a success, we were disturbed by the lack of uniformity in the size of the fish that we raised. From observations we concluded this was due to the size variations of our pellets. The fan blades cut most of the extrusions into bite size bits for the fingerling, but, inevitably, larger sized pellets were also cut. These slightly larger size pellets were grabbed by some of the fingerling which comically swam around the raceway like they were smoking a cigar. Though they were unable to eat the pellet, they would not let go. When the rest of the fish had finished eating, those with the cigars seemed to realize feeding time was over. They would drop the pieces they were unable to swallow and go hungry until the next feeding time. Russ and I felt if this happened to the same fingerling several times, the growth of that fingerling would definitely be affected.

What could we use to make the pellets more even in size? Macaroni and other pasta-like foods were uniformly cut. Would a macaroni forming machine work? As a youngster, I had gone to a school with a girl named Norma Scarpelli whose family made Italian pasta. Their plant, Porter-Scarpelli Inc., was located in northeast Portland. Bumble Bee's research director, Scott McLeod, went with me to this macaroni producing company. We were fascinated by the way the macaroni were uniformly extruded from their pasta machine. It seemed an ideal machine for making the uniform pellets we were looking for.

The name of the machine was "Ambrette" which was manufactured in New York. When we got back to Astoria, we phoned the manufacturer of this machine to see if mixtures slightly heavier than pasta doughs might be extruded. They felt it could and asked for a sample to try. After we sent the sample we received a phone call that our fish pellet dough would extrude. With that information we leased a small "Ambrette" with option to buy.

On our first trial, the machine extruded our dough beautifully with one exception. The extrusions, though uniform, were way too long even when we geared the cutter blade to its fastest speed. Our technician, Chuck Jow, modified the gearing system so the cutter blades would go much faster. A comment was made that if the machine weren't so heavy, it would take off like a helicopter. We put our dough mix into the extruder and the pellets were cut to the exact size we wanted except the little pellets were flying all over the room, bombarding spectators, experimenters and walls of the room. Chuck solved this problem by ingeniously devising a collection box which completely encompassed the cutter head of the machine. The box consisted of a series of sliding plywood panels, intricately designed but so amazingly simple we immediately dubbed it "Chuck's Chinese puzzle box."

Using the new pellet machine, we were able make large quantities of diets for a number of hatcheries throughout the state of Oregon. To make the quantities required, we had to improvise and locate equipment suitable to make pellets on a much larger scale than we ever had before. Because research money was very limited, we relied on available war surplus supplies in Salem. There we were able to find several bakery type mixers at virtually no cost. Norman Wolfgram, an excellent millwright who had just retired from the Pillsbury mill in Astoria, helped us build a pellet transfer system enabling us to have our own pellet sacking and bagging system. Hiram Johnson, the owner of Johnson Plumbing, located in the old Finnish Meat Market building, let us comb through his huge pile of used piping and take what we needed. He would often cut and thread pipes, knowing we did not have access to the equipment needed. Without the help of all the Astorians mentioned, and many others, the Oregon pellet would have taken much more time to develop.

All the hatcheries using the pellet had excellent returns but we now had our biggest hurdle to overcome. How were we going to supply the whole Oregon hatchery system? Should the State of Oregon go into the pellet business? The answer by state officials was a decisive "No," even though there were no fish food companies prepared to make this kind of pellet. Perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of the pellet development was that none of us who devised the pellet realized a public service patent was an option. Colleges and universities today, with educational funds much tougher to come by, are much more cognizant of patents possibilities. Without this foresight, it seemed to us the most important thing was for our research team to get our research commercialized. There was no question in my mind that a local fisheries industry should have the first chance to make these pellets.

Of all the companies on the river, Bumble Bee was most certainly the company of choice as they had done much to help us with the development. It was almost a forgone conclusion they would be the manufacturer of the pellet, however, the specification for the pellet still had to be formally drawn up. As we were developing the specifications, the State of Oregon said we would be required to use an open bidding procedure. I was somewhat concerned that no one would bid so I visited and talked with the people from most all the processing plants on the river. Most of the processors contacted showed some interest, but their enthusiasm was only lukewarm. To them, the bottom line was whether this operation could be profitable. When the day came for the bids to be opened, imagine our surprise when only one bid was received! The only company to make an accredited bid was Bioproducts, Ltd. of Warrenton, Oregon. Bumble Bee had taken the trouble to write a letter to the State of Oregon saying they would be interested in making the pellets only if the specification were modified to what they believed was practical. The State of Oregon told us the letter was not a valid bid and the Bioproducts bid was the only valid answer to our bid proposal. The bid was awarded to Bioproducts.

It was not an easy task for Bioproducts to make these pellets. They were entering a new field and lacked the capitalization to buy the best equipment for the process. Through hard work, effort, and innovations primarily devised by Bioproduct's staff member Orville Piippo, the process became commercially viable. This was a bold and far-sighted stroke that has paid off handsomely and Bioproducts should certainly be commended for taking a risk venture and running with it. In retrospect, one wonders what might have been if Bumble Bee had put in a valid bid. At the time, they had the capitalization which would have made the road to commercialization much easier. Years later, Dave Pratt, who worked with Jay Hendrickson, Vice President in charge of corporate development, told me Jay would often say he could kick himself in the rear for "letting this one get away." Today, the manufacture of fish food is a flourishing world-wide business and, as aquaculture farms continue to expand, fish food demands become ever greater. Without downplaying the ingenious techniques developed by Bioproducts (recently changed to Bio-Oregon through new ownership) who has done a wonderful job, one can only speculate whether Bumble Bee Seafoods would still be in operation in Astoria if they had gotten the bid. The rows and rows of piling at the old Bumble Bee plant stand like silent sentinels to what could have been.

Courtesy of the Oregon State University Seafoods Laboratory

Tom Groutage of the Oregon Fish Commission (left) at the time he was checking the catch of Bob Nikka (center) and his crewman, George Kauppi, (right) from the Youngs Bay test fisheries in the fall of 1961.

Conclusion

At the start of this test feeding program, not all of the hatchery managers were sold on the idea. Some of them resented the intrusion of this new feeding program for they felt such centralized feeding lacked flexibility. They felt it also eroded local control of their hatchery, which at times they felt they needed. But hatchery men are pragmatic people and as the ease of feeding, less clean-up, and most important of all, good quality fingerling became apparent, more and more hatchery men became enthusiastic converts. Proof, however, would be whether returns two years later would justify our optimism.

The first large-scale feeding trials were conducted on coho salmon at the Klaskanine hatchery. These coho were released in the spring of 1960 and scheduled to return in the fall of 1961 to Youngs Bay. Though we were optimistic we were not sure what to expect. It would be the first indication of whether our years of research would bear fruit. Sadly there were detractors who secretly hoped our program would fail. As for our research group, we were so optimistic we were concerned as to what to do if large numbers of fish returned and there was no one to harvest them. What a waste of a valuable resource that would be. These thoughts revealed our own confidence. A decision was made to put out a request for a commercial fisherman to do test fishing. That fisherman would be given a small financial compensation and the right to sell all the fish he caught. Bob Nikka was the only commercial fisherman who answered the call. It was apparent that few had faith in the research we had conducted. It was also obvious that most fishermen believed Youngs Bay, which had been closed to commercial fishing for more than 30 years, was not commercially viable.

The night the fall salmon season was opened, the Oregon State police received numerous calls of people poaching salmon in Youngs Bay. It was our test fisherman and his crewman. When Bob Nikka delivered his catch at the Union Fishermen's Coop dock, everyone stared in disbelief at the catch that came from Youngs Bay. In the ensuing few days, Bob Nikka and his crewman, George Kauppi, had the biggest catch of that late fall season.

With the yearling coho released at the Klaskanine hatchery, which had showed such an exciting return in Youngs Bay in 1961, we were elated. Now we felt sure the next year's return, when all of Oregon's salmon hatcheries had been fed the pellet, would be spectacular. And spectacular they were! Our program was a success. The following year, 1962 was also a winner, as was 1963.

But our biggest success was to occur in 1964. During that year, the fishing industry, which takes in sport interests as well as commercial interests, was being torn apart. The extremists within the ranks of the sportsmen had gotten enough signatures on an initiative to close the Columbia River to commercial salmon fishing, which would have effectively shut down the commercial salmon industry. That year, the largest returns of fish in Oregon's hatchery history rang the death knell for this initiative measure at the November 1964 election when the votes were counted. The Oregon Pellet had undoubtedly helped make it happen.

All this was capped off, on January 26, 1966, when Russ Sinnhuber, Tom McKee, Wally Hublou and I received the United States Department of the Interior Conservation Service Award for our work on the Oregon Pellet.

Epilogue

Thirty five years have now passed since that huge salmon return helped defeat the 1964 initiative referendum. Successful runs of salmon continued for many years and even stimulated fishermen in the Great Lakes to introduce Pacific salmon in their area. This introduction has been very successful and provides a huge economic boost to fishing interest in that area.

Unfortunately, in the Pacific Northwest, there has been a terrible down trend in salmon returns in recent years, particularly with the naturally spawning stock of salmon. Some purists call this stock our "wild stock," and in their attempts to find an answer to this alarming happening, many of them have branded dams and hatcheries as the main culprits in the salmon decline.

One cannot help but wonder why they continue to overlook what is obviously a major factor in this decline. One only needs to look at weather conditions which have so changed the ocean environment, that salmon and other animals dependent on the sea for their food are finding it difficult to survive. Immutable proof is the dying of the many seabirds along our coasts. It is said that many of them may become endangered. Seals and sea lions are finding it increasingly difficult to survive and continue to invade farther and farther up our estuaries to find food. Many sea birds are doing the same thing. These incursions and the resulting predation on the seaward migrating of salmon smolt and returning adult salmon take a huge toll. One more observation that points to the ocean condition as a major factor in the declining runs of salmon is what is taking place in Alaska. Few dams or hatcheries are located in the pristine areas of Alaska, yet many predicted runs have failed to appear. Fisheries biologists there say "ocean conditions" are causing the failure. Can the Alaskan failures be much different than our own? When ocean conditions become more favorable, we will see an atmosphere of hope regarding the recovery of salmon runs. However, we must be ever vigilant by maintaining good environmental, management, and hatchery regulations. More specifically, having worked many years on hatchery programs, I sincerely believe that properly managed hatcheries, along with research such as that which developed the Oregon Pellet, will help to insure the return of the salmon when ocean conditions become more favorable.✦

Editor's Note:

Many reasons have been advanced for the decline in the salmon population. The Clatsop County Historical Society does not endorse any particular explanation.

A GOOD FISH STORY

Ole Rakitouski lives in Wahkiakum county and as a rule he has been in the habit of devoting three months of his time every season in fishing, and the remainder in improving his place. During an interval that he was at home several years ago, he caught a young salmon, and after keeping it captive for several days liberated it. It hung around the place for some time, being fed by Ole quite regularly, until it finally disappeared. Time run along, until about three weeks ago, when the hardy Russian had again resumed his precarious undertaking in quest of the festive salmon.

One dark and stormy night, with the wind piping from the sou'west and a strong ebb tide flowing, Ole and his partner were endeavoring to take up their net ere they would be carried down too far and swept onto the bar. "We'll have to cut loose," cried Ole, but before the sentence had fairly left his lips a monster sea rose, like a convulsion of nature, with the boat and its occupants on its crest, and then with a crash and a deafening roar louder than ten thousand canon, the frail craft was carried down, down into an abyss like a seething, boiling caldron, with flying spray and froth in a blinding fury hurled. Our friend with the Cossack extraction had, with the tenacious instinct of a cat, clung to an oar, which barely kept him from sinking, and more dead than alive, with vivid thoughts of that celestial shore brightly illuminating his mind, as he was fast slipping away, when all at once he felt something rub up against him. With some supernatural instinct he made an effort to arouse himself, and to his utter astonishment, he beheld a large salmon of extraordinary size rubbing up to him. He loosened his grip on the oar and threw both arms around the salmon, who no sooner felt the burden than it flew through the water, at a terrific speed, and in less than it requires to relate it, poor Rakitouski was landed in Baker's bay upon terra firma once more. By a peculiar twinkle in the noble salmon's eye he recognized it was the same one he had caught when quite young, and as a means of rewarding the poor lone fisherman for his humane act the salmon had saved his life at an opportune moment.

--Originally from the *Chehalis Vidette* newspaper. *June 3, 1885 Daily Astorian*

The British Claim to Astoria

By Lawrence V. Parker

The British sailing ship *Racoon* sailed up the Pacific Coast arriving some twenty miles below the mouth of the Columbia River, on November 29, 1813. They had encountered bad weather for days before, but on that day, the ocean was calm. They dropped anchor at Cape Lookout. The next day, they weighed anchor, sending two boats, *Gig* and *Jolly Boat* ahead to sound the large bar at the river mouth. It was a fine day with smooth water and the *Racoon* easily passed over the bar to anchor at Bakers Bay.

The war between the British and the United States that had been fought on the other side of the continent finally reached the Northwest Coast. The purpose of the voyage of this British ship was to capture Astoria, established two years earlier by American John Jacob Astor for his Pacific Fur trading company.

After anchoring at Bakers Bay, Captain Black sent the armed *Cutter* up the river to assess the opponent's strength and to find a place to land. Duncan McDougall, one of the proprietors of the Pacific Fur Company, paddled his canoe out to the *Cutter*. McDougall was informed that the crew of the *Racoon* intended taking the post, by force if necessary. He was told that the men at the post would be no match for the heavily armed British.

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H.M. Sloop of War *Racoon*, Nov. 30, 1813, at Baker's Bay.
Courtesy of the artist, Hewitt Jackson, and the Oregon Historical Society.

McDougall, in turn, informed the men of the *Cutter* that Astor's partners at Astoria had earlier learned of the impending arrival of British forces, and had already sold out to the British owned North West Company. Nevertheless, on December 12, 1813, Captain Black of the H.M.S. *Racoon*, enacted the flag raising ceremony and Astoria was officially renamed Fort George in honor of King George III of England.

The Union Jack continued to wave over the waters of the Columbia River until October 6, 1818 when the United States reclaimed the territory under the "Treaty of Ghent," which brought an end to the war of 1812. Terms of this treaty provided that all territory taken in possession during the war would be returned to the original owner, so Astoria was returned to the Americans. The United States and Great Britain agreed to a joint occupation of the Oregon Country. Squables over ownership of the land, however, continued for many years.

In 1821, the North West Company merged with the Hudson Bay Company, both under the British flag, then moved their headquarters to Fort Vancouver. In 1846, when a treaty between the United States and Great Britain established the boundary at the 49th parallel, they closed their trading post in Astoria.

As the number of fur-bearing animals in the Lower Columbia area had greatly declined, the fur companies looked northward for new areas to exploit. Twenty years elapsed before the Hume brothers discovered a way to tap another valuable resource in the region, the Columbia River salmon.

Reference:

The Voyage of the Racoon: A 'Secret' Journal of a Visit to Oregon, California and Hawaii, 1813-1814. Edited by John A. Hussey, The Book Club of California, San Francisco, 1958.

A Letter from John Jacob Astor

Following is a letter written by John Jacob Astor to John Quincy Adams regarding the American establishment of Astoria. It was written on January 4, 1823 and was reprinted in the Daily Astorian *on March 6, 1883. Astor was philosophical about the financial loss he suffered when his partners in the Pacific Fur Company sold out cheaply to the British-owned North West Company. The letter was written to U.S. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams two years before he became the 6th president of the United States.*

NEW YORK, Jan. 4, 1823.

SIR:-- I have the honor to receive your letter of the 24th ultimo. Indisposition has prevented me from acknowledging the receipt thereof at an earlier period.

You request information of engagements made at or about 1814 by the Northwest company and citizens of the United States, by which that company became possessed of a settlement made at the mouth of the Columbia river by citizens of the United States. The settlement to which you allude I presume is "Astoria," as I know of no other having been made at or near the mouth of that river. Several circumstances are alleged as having contributed to the arrangements by which the Northwest company came into possession of that settlement, but chiefly to the misuse of confidence which had been placed in Mr. McDougall, who at the time the arrangements were made, and at the time my agent, Mr. Wilson G. Hunt, was absent, acted as sub-agent.

I beg leave briefly to state that contemplating to make an establishment at the mouth of the Columbia river, which should serve as a place depot and give further facilities for conducting a trade across the continent to that river and thence to the ranges of the northwest coast and country to Canton in China, and from thence to the United States. Arrangements were accordingly made in 1810 for a party of men to cross the continent for the Columbia river. At the same time I fitted out the ship *Tonquin*, carrying twenty guns and sixty men commanded by the late Captain Thorn, lieutenant in the United States Navy.

The ship sailed in September, 1810, having on board the means of making an establishment at Columbia where they arrived on the 22nd of March, 1811. They landed, found the natives friendly and built a fort, erected a house, stores, &c. This being accomplished, Captain Thorn left thirty men in possession of the place to await the party who were to make a voyage overland, these also happily arrived, though not till several months after. On or about the 14th of June, Captain Thorn left the Columbia river with a train to make some trade on the coast and then return to the river, but unfortunately Thorn never returned. At about two hundred miles north of the Columbia, he put in a bay to trade with the natives. Not attending to the precautions necessary, as he had been instructed to do, to guard against an attack, he suffered a whole tribe of Indians to come on board and about the ship. An attack was made; he was overpowered, fire was communicated to the magazine, the ship was blown up and every soul on board or near her perished.

In 1811, I fitted out another ship, the *Beaver*, carrying twenty guns with a duplicate cargo to the ship *Tonquin* and sixty or seventy men. The captain, Fowles, was instructed to sail for the Columbia river and in search of the men who were sent across the continent as also of the *Tonquin*. The *Beaver* sailed from this port in October, 1811, arrived in Columbia in May following; found the establishment and landed such men, goods, provisions, etc., as the establishment was in need of.

My instructions to the captain were that after supplying the establishment, he should proceed to "Chatka," a Russian settlement, for the purpose of trade, and then return to Columbia, take what furs we had and proceed to Canton and thence to New York; had accordingly left Columbia (and most unfortunately, Mr. Hunt of Trenton, New Jersey, my chief agent on the river with him, sailed as directed for the Russian settlement and effected the object; but instead of following instructions to return to Columbia, he sailed direct for Canton leaving Mr. Hunt at the Sandwich Islands to await the arrival of another ship which I promised to send from this port in 1812.

The ship *Beaver* arrived in Canton and received there the news of the war. I had sent orders to the captain to return to Astoria but he was fearful of being captured and remained in safety at Canton till the war was over when he came home. In consequence of the war, found it inconvenient to send a ship in 1812, but I did send the *Lark* early in 1813, with directions to the captain to sail for Columbia and to stop at the Sandwich Islands for information.

Being within a days sail of those islands, the ship in a squall of wind was upset and finally crippled on the beach of one of those islands, a wreck, ship and cargo totally lost. Here was met Mr. Hunt, who after all the information he received, and my great desire to protect the establishment at the Columbia river, procured an American vessel, took some provisions, sailed and arrived in Columbia river. He there learned that Mr. McDougall had transferred all my property to the Northwest company, who when in possession of it by a sale, as he called it, for the sum of about fifty-eight thousand dollars of which he retained fourteen thousand dollars for wages said to be due some of the men from the price obtained for the goods, and he having himself become interested in the purchase had made a partner of the Northwest company, some idea may be formed of this man's correctness of dealing. It will be seen by the agreement (that of which I transmit a copy) and the inventory that he sold to the Northwest company eighteen thousand one hundred and seventy and a quarter pounds of beaver at two dollars, which was at that time selling at Canton at five and six dollars a pound; nine hundred and seventy otter skins at fifty or half dollar, which were selling at Canton at $5 and $6 per skin.

I estimated the whole property to be worth nearer two hundred thousand dollars than forty thousand, about the sum I received in bills on Montreal. Previous to the transactions of Mr. McDougall who had already established trading posts in the interior and were in contact with the Northwest company. It is now to be seen what means have been used by them to counteract my plan. It is well known that as soon as the Northwest company had information of my intention and plan for conducting my commercial operations, they dispatched a party of men from the interior with a view to arrive before my people at the Columbia. These men were obliged to return without affecting their object. In the meantime representations were made to their government as to the probable effect of my operations on their interests and requesting to interpose in their behalf. This being in time of peace the government did not deem it advisable to do so. So soon, however, as war was declared those representations were renewed. Aid was asked from the government and it was granted. The frigate *Phoebe* and sloops-of-war *Racoon* and *Porcupine* were sent from England with orders to proceed to Columbia river and destroy my property. They sailed from England early in January 1813.

Arrived at Rio Janiero, Admiral Dickson ordered the *Phoebe* frigate with one sloop to pursue Capt. Porter in the frigate *Essex* and the sloop-or-war *Racoon* to the Columbia. She arrived there, took possession in the name of the king, and changed the name of the place from Astoria to Fort George. Previous to this the Northwest company had dispatched another or second party of men to the Columbia. They arrived in absence of Mr. Hunt. Mr. McDougall gave them support and protection and they commenced after some time to negotiate with this gentleman.

The reason assigned by him for his conduct will be seen by an extract of a letter said to be sent by a Mr. Shaw to the Northwest company, and of which I send a copy. The plan by me adopted was such as must materially have affected the Northwest company and the Hudson Bay company, and it was easy to be forseen that they would employ every means to counteract my operations, and which, as my impressions, I stated to the executive of your department as early as February, 1813, as will be seen by the copy of a sketch of a letter which I wrote to the secretary of state, to which no reply was given. On repeated applications some time after, aid was promised me, but I believe the situation of our country rendered it inconvenient to give it. You will observe that the name of the Pacific Fur company is made use of at the commencement of the arrangements for this undertaking. I preferred to have it appear as a business of a company rather than that of an individual, and several of the gentlemen engaged--Mr. Hunt, Mr. Crooks, Mr. McKay, Mr. McDougall, and Stuart--as were in effect, to be interested as partners in the undertaking, so far as respecting the project which might arise, but means were furnished by me and the property was solely mine, and I sustained the loss which though considerable, I do not regret, because had it not been for the unfortunate Occurrence just stated, I should have been, as I believe, most richly rewarded, as it will be seen that the difference of price in beaver and otter skins alone, say what I received and the value of them at Canton at that time, is about $60,000. I am, sir, your obedient servant.

JOHN JACOB ASTOR

Courtesy of The Mason Family

The troller *Destiny*, in 1947, owned by Wilbur Northup, and built in 1943 by John Merilainen.

Clatsop County Historical Society
1618 Exchange, Astoria, OR 97103